THE SAINTS ANCHOR-HOLD, IN ALL *Storms* and *Tempests*.

Preached in Sundry

SERMONS.

And Published for the *Support* and *Comfort* of *Gods People*, in all times of *Tryal*.

By *John Davenport*, B. D. sometime Minister of *Stephens* Coleman-street *London*; and now Pastor of the Church of *Christ* in *New-Haven*, in *New-England*.

Heb. 6. 18. *Lay hold upon the Hope set before us.*
19. *Which hope we have, as an Anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entreth into that within the vail.*
20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entred, even Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedec.*

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The PREFACE.

To the Christian Reader.

AS the whole Creation hath groaned ever since its original subjection unto Vanity, earnestly expecting the manifestation of the Sons of God: so more especially in these latter dayes the travelling pains thereof have encreased, as presages of its approaching Deliverance. The vanity of it hath alwayes been great, but the Experimental Discoveries thereof never

more than now. In this case it is the wisdome of a Christian to secure to himself an Interest in a Portion as sufficient and permanent as Jehovah *that never changeth: A greater than which cannot be procured: This may, and a less will never satisfie: By this men live indeed, and in this is the Life of a Christian.* That the Lord's Portion are his People, *addeth nothing to him that is all sufficient to himself; but,* that the Lord is their Portion, *is all in all to them. And this is the foundation of their Hope and Comfort. For here we are all embarqued in a Vessel, sometimes caught with Windes, sometimes covered with Waves, and should soon be at our wits end, but for this sure and steadfast ancre which entreth into that* within the Vail.

Now that Portion, and this Hope

grounded

grounded on it, are the Churches, and a Christians support in the midst of their lamentations: For the Church at this time was driven from Jerusalem, Zion, Temple, Temple-Ordinances, and native Place of residence, greatly afflicted and tossed with Tempests. This is only remaining, that she hath God for her portion, and Hope for her Anchor, never to be taken from her. And both these are the Subject of the ensuing Discourse, seasonable and suitable at all times, especially in these last moments of the last Dayes, in which God is shaking Heaven, Earth, and Sea, in order to the appearance of the Desire of all Nations.

As touching the Author of this Treatise (in whose heart the Text was written by the finger of God, before the Discourse was penned by his own hand) His Piety, Learning,

Gravity,

Gravity, Experience, Judgment, do not more commend him to all that know him, than this Work of his may commend it self to them that read it: And the consideration of the two hinges on which the Text

Valde sunt cognata robur, Fides & Spes. Dr. Par. in Heb. 6.

turns, Faith, and Hope, their near cognation, concomitance, usefulness, necessity, power, comfort, the first entring the second, the one commensurate with the other, is enough to procure from thee the expence of a little time, to see and weigh what is here spoken of these most necessary Helps to Eternall Happiness, which will never relinquish the Believer, till they have resigned him up to the glorious Vision and fruition of the Objects believed in, and hoped for, there leaving the Soul to the everlasting

exercise

exerciſe of never failing Love to God and the Saints in Glory.

That this holy Faith *and* Hope *in God, together with fervent Love to God, and one to another, may dayly flouriſh, and be confirmed in the hearts and lives of all the Saints on earth, till they enter upon their purchaſed Poſſeſſion (which is the end of their Faith and Hope, to the praiſe of the Glory of God) in Glory, is the hearty deſire and Prayer of*

Thy Fellow-Brethren

in this *Faith* and *Hope*,

William Hooke.

Joſeph Caryl.

Errata.

Page 19. Lines 12, and 13. read *Causally*. p. 66. l. *ult.* r. him. p. 76. l. 26. r. resolved. p. 126. l. 13. r. quietnesse. p. 130. l. *ult.* r. grounds. p. 134. l. 24. r. There. p. 145. l. 18. r. brought. p. 151. l. 16. r. notice. p. 164. l. 25. r. *last*. p. 204. l. 4. r. *thereof*.

The Saints ANCHOR-HOLD.

Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.*

THis Book is, according to the judgment of a godly learned * Writer, an Abridgment of all *Jeremies* Sermons, from the 13th. year of *Josias*, unto the 4th. of *Joakim*; and that Book which God commanded *Jeremy* to write, and to cause *Baruch* to read it publikely, upon the day of a Fast, kept in the ninth

* Mr. *Broughton.*

See the story at large, in Jer. 36.

moneth of the fifth year of *Iehojakim*, which afterward *Iehudi* read unto the King, sitting by a fire, in his winter house, who was so far from repenting, that, when he had read three or four leaves of it, he cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire, till all was consumed, and rejected the intercession of some of his Princes, that he would not burn it, and he commanded to lay hold upon *Ieremy* and *Baruch*; But God hid them. Whereupon the Lord commanded *Ieremy* to write the Book again, with Additions, which the same Writer thinks, was this Chapter, which consisteth of a threefold Alphabet, in the Hebrew. The Prophet, having discharged his offices, in labouring to convince the Jews of their sins, and to bring them to repentance, when he found not the successe he desired, he fals to lamenting and weeping, for their pride and obstinacy in sin, and teacheth them also how to lament their own misery in Captivity; and, because there was among

among them a basket of good figges, he teacheth them how to exercise faith and hope in the middest of their sorrows. Among other passages, my Text hath a tendency thereunto, which admits a double consideration: 1. As a part of a Lamentation. 2. As an expression of a free spirit. Accordingly I shall handle it, first, as a part of a Lamentation. In verse 17, 18. you may see their deep dejection and despondency; *I said my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.* In vers. 19, 20, 21. you may see how, from the good fruit of their affliction, in humbling them, they gather hope. In vers. 22, 23. they can see mercy in God towards them in their Affliction. In my Text, they are as men that find rest, after their dangers and tossings at Sea, by casting Anchor upon firme ground, in a safe Harbour. The Doctrinal note I collect from the words so considered, is this:

Doct. Thoughit may be the case of true believers to be greatly dejected for a time, yet, even then, God doth support their spirits, and quicken their

faith and hope in him. To clear this point, we must prove two things.
1. That it may be the case of true believers to be greatly dejected, for a time. This may be abundantly confirmed, both by the Scriptures in the examples of *Iob*, *David*, *Hezekiah*, *Asaph*, *Heman*, and of *Christ* himself, in the Garden, and on the Crosse, and by reasons of sundry sorts.

R. 1. From God himself, sometimes with-holding the light of his countenance from true believers. Then it is with them, as it is with the earth, which would be covered with darknesse, coldnesse, and deadnesse, if the light and influence of the Sun were with-drawn from it. He is the God of all comfort, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. without him no true comfort can be had. Sometimes he creates darknesse in the Soul; then it is filled with fear and amazement, and disquietment. And thus he doth, for holy and good ends. 1. To conforme believers to Christ, as members to their head, *Rom.* 8. 29. 2. To informe them, where their *life is hid*, viz. *with Christ in God*, *Col.* 3. 3.

and

and that Christ, *the last Adam, is made a quickning Spirit.* 1 *Cor.* 15. 45. that thereby he may quicken his People in God, who quickeneth the dead, when themselves had not only a sentence of death, in their bodies, as *Paul* had, 2. *Cor.* 1. 9. but also a sense of death in their soules, as *Heman* had, *Psalme* 88. 5. 3. To reforme them. Partly, for correction of their unthankfulnesse for former comforts received from him; and for their not improveing them unto the ends for which he gave them. As a father, when he seeth his child doth but play with the candle which he afforded him to work by, takes it from him, and leave him in the dark. Partly, for prevention of spiritual pride. 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. Of spiritual wantonnesse, and self confidence; *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. Of carnal security; *Cant.* 5. 6. and sundry other distempers.

R. 2. From Satan; that envious one, who, as in the beginning he sought to cast *Adam* out of Paradice, and to bereave him of his happinesse in communion with God, so now, finding believers in the Kingdom of grace,

which consists in righteousnesse, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, when he cannot deprive them of their righteousnesse, will endeavour to disturbe their peace, and damp their joy, knowing, that when they performe duties uncomfortably, they do them weakly and but by halves. To this end: 1. He strives to hide from them those promises that might comfort them, when they have most need and use of them, and he sometimes prevailes herein, *Heb.* 12. 5. 2. He suggests any word that may terrefie them, and presents to their memory and thoughts former sins, to amaze them. 3. He presents all things unto them in false glasses; the comforts of God, in a diminishing glasse, that God may seem to them lesse merciful, lesse gracious then he is, and the promises of God lesse free, lesse general then they are; that all the consolations of God may seem small things to them, *Iob* 15. 11. but he presents to them their sins in a multiplying glasse, that they may seem more, and greater then they are; their sins, as impardonable; their miser-

miseries, as intollerable, incurable; their state, as desperate. 4. He useth his instruments to deal with them, as the Philistims did with *Isaack*, whose wells they stopped up, to make unprofitable to them those wells of Salvation, from whence believers might draw waters of consolation. Thus he used *Saul* to banish *David* from the ordinances, and wicked men to insult and reproach him, saying, *Where is now thy God?* Psal. 42. 3. So others, to twit them with their Religion, when they are in distresse, saying, where are now your prayers, your hearing, reading, meditating, conferring, your conscientious and exact walking, your confidence in God? You live more dejectedly then others, and are as fearful, as others, to die. Thus they thrust, as it were, swords and daggers into their bones, to kill their comforts, as *David* there complained, verse 10.

R. 3. From themselves: 1. Sin presseth down their spirits, and hinders their cheerful progresse in a Christian course, as weight doth runners

in a race, *Heb.* 12. 1. Sorrow in the heart brings it down, especially, when guilt of sin is added to it. When the shoulder is out of joynt, it cannot bear its own pain, much lesse other burthens. So it is with the soul, a wounded spirit who can bear? *Prov.* 18. 14. 2. Their spirit sometimes suffers from their bodies, by sympathy; as in melancholy, which so darkens their imagination, that every thing seems dark to them, and so sowres their spirits, that every thing seems bitter to them, and so fills them with fears and suspitions, that every thing affrights them. 3. Sometimes passion so prevaileth in them, that the higher faculties of the soul are subjected to the affections, which so bemist the understanding, that it cannot judge of things according to right reason: The conscience becomes suspensive, and wavering, and the memory, like a leaking vessel, lets the grounds of comfort run out, and be forgotten: 4. Sometimes spiritual gifts of grace are not exercised, but as the body growes listless when some dull humour seizeth

seizeth upon it; so in the soul, when faith is oppressed by unbelief, hope with fears, they do not put forth themselves to wrestle with God, and stir up themselves to take hold on him, but yield unto every temptation and discouragement. Thus you see, that it may be the case of believers to be greatly dejected, for a time.

The second thing to be cleared, is; That though it be thus with true believers, for a time; yet then God will do two things for them.

1. He will secretly support them, so that they may say as *Paul* did, in 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.* God dealt with the basket of good figges, in Captivity, as *Christ* did with *Peter*, who first let him see his own weakness, in the water, then quickned him to cry unto him for help, and then stretched forth his hand and upheld him. *Matt.* 14. 30, 31. So the Lord left the Church so far that they complained my hope is perished from the Lord, yet speedily raised

them up in sight of his mercy to trust and hope in him. In like manner, he supports believers.

R. 1. From Gods unchangeablenesse in his love, and unweariednesse in doing them good. *Isa.* 64. 5. and 40. 27, 28, 29, 31.

R. 2. From Gods faithfulnesse in his covenant and promises. *Isa.* 54. 8, 9. *Psal.* 37. 24. *Heb.* 13. 5. 2. He will quicken their faith, to look unto himself for relief and comfort, in such times, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *Psal.* 121. 1, 2. *Jon.* 2. 2, 4. for these reasons:

R. 1. From the efficacy of the spirit of faith in them. As the needle in the Compasse, being touched with the Load-stone, though it may be moved and shaken this way and that, for a time, yet resteth not till it point to the North; so the soul, being touched with the spirit of faith, though it may be forced, by Temptation, from its bent, for a time, yet it hath no rest, till it stand God-ward. They may by Temptations be as sheep driven from mountaine to mountaine, and forget their resting place. *Jer.* 50. 6. But the

the ſpirit of faith in them will cauſe them to return unto God, and to ſay, as *David*, *Pſal.* 116. 7. Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul. Believers are like *Noahs* Dove, that finding no reſt for the ſoles of its feet, in the deluge, returned unto the Arke. Other men will like the Raven, be ſoon ſatisfied with other things.

R. 2. From the ſuitable operation of Gods ſpirit in them unto Gods end in afflicting them. Gods end, in afflicting his children, is to drive them from all other things unto himſelf. For he corrects them for their good, *Heb.* 12. 10. And its good for them to draw neer to God, *Pſal.* 73. 28. When afflictions work us thereunto, it is from the ſpirits ſanctifying operation in them. For, 1. afflictions cannot work thus of themſelves, but rather ſet men further off from God by diſcontentment with his providence, becauſe it croſſeth their carnal affections. And, 2. the ſoul of it ſelf is apt to miſgivings, in ſuch caſes, and to have hard thoughts of God. And 3. Satan takes ſuch occaſions to breed and in-

creaſe

creaſe a diſtance and diviſion between the ſoul and God. Therefore it muſt be from the ſanctifying operation of Gods ſpirit in them and with them, when they work this good. *Rom.* 8. 28.

Vſe 1. For Inſtruction. 1. Here we may ſee the differene between believers and others, in their dejected condition. 1. Believers have the ſpirit of faith in them, whereby the ſoul, though it be over-borne by paſſion and Temptation, for a time, yet it will worke it ſelf into freedom again, as oil will be uppermoſt. The ſpirit, as a ſpring, will be cleanſing it ſelf more and more, from that muddie that is in it. But the heart of unbelievers is like a ſtanding poole, where that which is caſt into it reſts. They are like the Sea, where trouble and unquietneſſe are in their proper place, *Iſa.* 57. 20. True reſt and peace are for ever ſeparated from ſin in any ſoul, till the breach between God and the ſoul be made up by faith in Chriſt. 2. Believers have an intereſt in God, and he in them, through Jeſus Chriſt. Hence they are kept, as in a Garriſon,

by,

by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. through the intercession of Christ, *Luke* 22. 3. by the spirit of Christ dwelling with them, and who shall be in them and abide with them for ever: So that they shall not be left comfortlesse, *Joh.* 14. 16, 17, 18. Hereupon *Paul* triumphed, in *Rom.* 8. 31, &c. Where he puts the question about persons, and answers about things, neither shall separate them from the love, which either Christ bears to them, or they to Christ. Sin cannot separate them from Christs love to them, because he hath more than conquered it, by his own power. Tribulation cannot seperate believers from the love they bear to Christ, because they shall more then conquer it, by the power of Christ. It is not our hold of God and Christ, but Gods and Christs hold of us that keeps us to him. The root bears us up, not we the root. *Rom.* 11. 18. This *Asaph* acknowledged unto God, when his feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipt; saying, *Nevertheless I am continual-*

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by which thou hast holden me by my right hand, Psal. 73. 2, 23. But unbelievers are without Christ, and without God in the World. Eph. 2. 12. Therefore when their creature-comforts fail them, they are as a ship tossed in the Sea without a Pylot, and without an Anchor, which soon is bulged upon Rocks, or falleth upon quick-sands, having no God to guide or support them.

2. Hence we may learn how to carry our selves toward afflicted dejected Christians. Judge mercifully and wisely of poor weaklings. Psal. 41. 1. men are apt, through want of wisdom and love, to mis-apprehend the causes of their dejectednesse. It is the lesse to be wondred at, that an heathen King mis-interpreted the dejected countenance of Nehemiah, Neh. 2. 2. seeing godly and wise Eli, mis-censured Hannah, as a distempered woman, when she was in bitternesse of spirit, 1 Sam. 1. 14, 15. and Iobs friends mis-judged him for his afflictions, and men generally mis-construed Christs sufferings, Isa. 53. 4, 5. They are not alwayes the best that are

merriest,

merriest, nor they the merriest in heart that are so in the face. Nor are they alwayes of the weakest faith, or spirit, who are sometimes dejected, as we see *Joshuah* was; in *Josh.* 7. Therefore be not rash, or harsh in censuring the dejected; but rather worke with God for their support and comfort. Two things are required hereunto; knowledge, and goodness, *Rom.* 15. 14. The first will make you able, the second willing to be helpful to such. Labour to abound in both, 1. In knowledge both of the word, *Col.* 3. 16, and of the temper of the party, that you may speak to them suitably, and seasonably, *Isa.* 56. 4. 2. In goodnesse, to pity them, to pray for them, and to set them in joynt. *Gal.* 6. 1.

2. As for your selves, beware that you mis-judge not your own estate toward God, under such dejections, but know that, if ever you had any clear testimony of Gods love to you, in Jesus Christ, the love of God toward you in Christ is unchangeable, it is an everlasting love, *Jer.* 31. 3. There-

fore

fore hold the confidence and rejoycing of your hope firme unto the end, *Heb.* 3. 6. and say, with the Church, in *Micah.* 7. 8. *when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.*

Mark. Use 2. For Admonition. Take heed of placing your comfort too much in the creature, which being subject to change, and inconstancy, will be apt to breed disquietment. Vexation inseparably followes vanity, when vanity is not apprehended to be where it is. In what degree any are lifted up in expectation of satisfying good from creatures, or overjoyed with the comforts of them, in that degree they are dejected in the dis-appointment of their hope, and distressed in the losse of creature-contentments. Inordinacy of affections imbitters all such afflictions. Hence arise those bitter complaints; I had fetched my contentment and hope in such a friend, or relation, but now they are gone, and with them all my joy is gone. Woe is me, I am undone. Therefore *Agur* prayed wisely, in *Prov.* 30. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies.* i. e. vain

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and false apprehensions; whereby the affections are too strongly fixed upon things that are vain, and lying, promising that contentment, which they cannot yield; confidence in vanities makes them Idols, and makes the heart vaine, like the things it relyes upon, *Psal.* 115. 8. They shall find continual disquietment who walk in a vain shadow, *Psal.* 39. 6. The best remedy against this is, by dwelling in the secret of the most High, to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. *Psal.* 91. 1, 2.

Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, &c.*

The words having been considerd, as they lie in the context, as a part of a Lamentation; we proceed to handle them as in my Text they hold forth the expression of a free spirit, that is, of a spirit set at liberty from those sad perplexities, wherein it had been intangled, and held under deep dejection, and despondency. The Text, thus considered, containeth the Anchor-Hold of a tossed afflicted spirit:

wherein three particulars are to be noted, 1. An Assertion, *The Lord is my portion.* 2. A Proof of it, *saith my soul.* 3. A Consectary, or inference from the premises; *Therefore will I hope in him.* I shall speak onely of the first, at this time: *The Lord is my portion.* חלק, a part, or portion, is not to be taken here in the Mathematical, or common use of that word, as denoting a part of a whole, as it is frequently in Scripture, when that part of estate, which Parents give their children, is called their portion, *Gen.* 31. 14. and that part of the spoil, which is the Souldiers share, is called their portion, *Gen.* 14. 24. and that *dimension* of food, which is allowed unto any, is called their portion, *Deut.* 18. 8. and the almes given to the poor is called their portion, *Eccl.* 11. 2. For God is not parted, or divided, and distributed among his people, so as one hath one part of him, another another part of God; but every one hath whole God wholly, as the whole Sun shines to every one, in which respect God is called a *Sun,*

Psal.

Psal. 84. 11. Therefore God is said to be his peoples portion; not in a comparative, but in an absolute sense, God himself is theirs, a suitable and all sufficient good to them. They have, not onely gifts and all good things from him, but himself also to be their God, in the Covenant of Grace, through Jesus Christ. He is their portion though *not formally*, yet in two senses: 1. *Objectively*, as he is their ultimate end, and chief good. 2. *Causally*, as he gives, together with himself, in Christ, all good to them. The Doctrinal note shall be this:

Doct. All true believers have such a blessed interest in God, as renders him their portion. It is the voice of faith, to say, *The Lord is my portion.* Others may say, The Lord is an all-sufficient portion: But onely Believers can truly say, *The Lord is my portion.* Because onely faith interests a man in God, and appropriates him to him. This faith doth by a double act. 1. By a direct act, whereby true believers see in God those properties, which are required in a satisfying

fying portion. They are three: 1. All-sufficiency. 2. Perpetuity. 3. Safety in placing his happinesse and full contentment there. All these the Scripture declare to be in God alone. 1. Sufficiency, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Psal.* 84. 11. 2. Perpetuity. It tells us, that *he is without shadow of change*, *Jam.* 1. 17. and that *he will never fail, nor forsake* his people, *Heb.* 13. 5. 3. Safety, in placing all our contentment and happinesse in him alone, *Psal.* 144. 15. 2. By a reflected act of faith, a believer seeth his peculiar right and interest in God, as his portion. Hence David said, *The Lord is the portion of mine Inheritance, and of my Cup*, *Psal.* 16. 5. and, *Thou art my portion O Lord*, *Ps.* 119. 57. and Asaph, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire, besides thee?* And again, *God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*, *Psal.* 73. 25, 26. To cleer this, two things must be added: 1. The grounds, whereupon the Saints have claimed this interest in God, as their portion. 2. The

use

use they have made of God, under this notion and relation. For the first, Their title unto God, as their portion, is founded: 1. In Gods voluntary and free donation of himself to them, in the Covenant of Grace, whereby both they become his portion. *Deut.* 32. 9. *The Lords portion is his people*, and he becomes their portion; *The portion of Jacob is the former of all things: The Lord of Hosts is his Name*, *Jer.* 10. 16. An act so done, by one, that is, *Sui juris*, is a strong binding act, as *Peter* argued in the case of *Ananias*, *Acts* 5. 4. It was free and deliberate, and therefore exceedingly dishonourable to break it. God stands much upon his honour in this, *Psal.* 89. 34. *My Covenant will I not break.* And *Psal.* 111. 5. *He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.* 2. This donation is confirmed sundry wayes: 1. By Oath, *Psal.* 89. 35. *Once have I sworn by my holinesse.* Again, in *Psal.* 105. 9. *He remembred his Oath unto Isaack.* The Covenant of Grace, whereby God gives himself to be his peoples

God

God and portion, *Micah* saith, *God hath sworn unto our Fathers from the dayes of old*, *Micah.* 7. *ult.* Which also *Zachary* declares to be performed when he sent Christ, *Luke* 1. 73. 2. By Seals: As *Circumcision* is called *a seal of the righteousnesse, which is by faith*, *Rom.* 4. 11. because it externally sealed the Covenant, whereby God becomes the God of his people, *Gen.* 17. 7, 11. So it is, with both the Sacraments of the New Testament, by parity of reason. 3. By marriage unto Christ, *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. Agreements upon marriage, are firme, because upon rational consideration. A consideration inserted, adds weight to a Deed and Covenant. The consideration is, that we should be joyned unto the Lord Jesus, and then, *all the promises of God, in him, are Yea and Amen to us*, in him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. And Christs God and Father is our God and portion, *Joh.* 20. 17. 4. By a recovery, after judgment, if I may so speak, when, after they are fallen into Gods displeasure, and returned to him, with repentance for

and

and from their sins; and renewing their faith in Christ, they have renewed their taking hold of the Covenant and have pleaded it with God, and their plea hath been accepted. Thus did *Moses* for *Israel*, after they had sinned, in the matter of the Golden Calf, *Exod.* 32. 10, 13. and the *Israelites* for themselves *Isa.* 63. 12, 16, 17, 19. The second thing to be shewn is, what use the Saints have made of their right and interest in God, as their portion. They have made use of him thus, both for themselves, and others. 1. For themselves: 1. To glory in God; *This God is our God. Psal.* 48. *ult.* 2. *To delight themselves in the Lord*, in confidence of his goodnesse toward them, in the middest of Temptations, *Psal.* 37. 4. Whence followeth a rowling themselves upon him in all their wayes and difficulties, *verse* 5. and a patient waiting upon God in delays, with hope of a good issue, *verse* 7. 2. For others, whether they be friends or enemies, or of a middle sort. 1. Friends. A poor believer can pleasure his richest

richest friends out of this his portion, his God. This is a Prophets and a righteous mans reward, *Mat.* 10. 41. Thus *Paul* abundantly recompenced all his friends and well-willers out of his portion, *Phil.* 4. 19. *My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.* 2. Enemies: In Jesus Christ all believers have sufficient help from God against all sorts of enemies, and can, in an holy manner challenge them to do their worst, and triumph over them before the battail, upon this assurance, *My God will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded*, *Isa.* 50. 7, 8, 9. Other men are strong in men, in armes, in shipping, in fortifications, &c. a believer hath all in God, he is *Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, *Eph.* 6. 10. 3. A middle sort; *Laban* fared the better for *Jacob*, *Potiphar*, *Pharaoh*, and all *Egypt*, for *Joseph*: The *Sodomites* for *Lot*: The Mariners, and all that were in the Ship, for *Paul*, *Acts* 27, 24. The World for the Saints, for the holy seed are תמכי the propps that shoar

ſhoar up the places where they live, that the wrath of God doth not over-flow, and over-whelm them. *Iſa.* 6. 13.

Uſe 1. For Inſtruction: Hence learn to behold and admire the excellency, and happineſſe of every true believer in his portion. The All-ſufficient God is their portion. His greatneſſe, power, mercy, grace, goodneſſe, faithfulneſſe, forgiveneſſe, juſtice, all are for them; and, that they may poſſeſſe him, as their portion, he gives them his ſon, to be theirs, through faith, and with him all things, 1 *Cor.* 3, 21, 22, 23. Thus, *The brother of low degree is exalted, Iam.* 1. 9. He hath the beſt portion that God can give, and upon the beſt aſſurance that God can make, *Heb.* 6. 18. Hence *David* calleth ſuch *the excellent ones*, *Pſ.* 16. 3. He had converſed with rich men, great men, wiſe men, after the fleſh; yet he called none of them, the excellent ones. He well knew that *the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, *Prov.* 12. 26.

Vse 2. For Exhortation: 1 Generally, to all; to make out for this portion. To this end, wait upon God in his Ordinances with thirsting souls: It will not be in vain, *Isai* 5.5. 15.2, 3. *Prov.* 8. 34, 35. For thereby, either it shall be cleered unto you that the Lord is your portion, or the Lord will become your portion. And he is so unto them, in whom faith is wrought in Christ by the Spirit, in the Ministry of the Gospel. They that can say to Christ, with *Thomas*, *My Lord and my God*, *Iohn* 20. 28. may also say to God, with *David*, in *Ps.* 142. 5. *O Lord, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* This is the priviledge of those, who answer Gods call, by joyning to him in Covenant. So saith the Lord, *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*, *Ezek.* 16. 8. And again, in *Hos.* 2. 23. *I will say unto them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God.*

To perswade you hereunto: Consider, 1. Every man desires to have the

beſt, for his portion in other things, in houſes, lands, food, apparel cattle. But this portion is ſimply abſolutely the beſt. This Chriſt teacheth, in *Luke* 16. 12. This he calls our own, thoſe, *another mans.* When a man views houſes, or ſurveys land, or tells money for another man, his heart is not ſo affected with them, as when he views, ſurveys, tells for himſelf. Propriety draws and engages the heart to that wherein a man hath a property, though it be but mean and worthleſſe, and carrieth the heart after it; much more, when propriety and a moſt worthy property meet together; as *David* found this to be, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. 2. The miſery of thoſe that have not this portion *Eph.* 2. 12. Little, or rather, no cauſe have ſuch to bleſſe themſelves in their worldly portions and poſſeſſions, as worldly men are apt to do, *Pſal.* 49. 18. For they *have their portion onely in this life*, which is but a vapour: But believers are happy in their portion, in God, both in, and after this life: For they *ſhall behold his face in righteouſneſſe, and ſhall be ſa-*

tisfied, when they awake with his likeneſſe, Pſal. 17, 14, 15. Attend therefore, in time, to the counſel of Chriſt, in *Rev.* 3. 17, 18.

2. Specially, To believers; To behave themſelves as it becomes thoſe, who have God for their portion. That you may ſo do, 1. Profeſſedly avouch God to be your portion, *Deut.* 26. 17. This is done two wayes, 1. When you ſet your love upon him, with ſuch an eſteem of him, as is meet for ſuch a portion. *Where a mans treaſure is, there will his heart be alſo, Matth.* 6. 21. Let God be your treaſure, when you look upon all things in the world, ſingle out thoſe that you account moſt amiable, deſirable; then aſcend, in your thoughts to heaven, and contemplate all the excellencies there, the rivers of pleaſure, the bleſſed fellowſhip of Saints in glory; each of them as dear to another, as if all relations of husbands, and wives, of parents, and children, and friends, were in every one of them; yet let God and Chriſt be above them all. So did *Aſaph, Pſal.* 73. 25. So will every one that knows

knows Gods name aright. *Psal.* 91. 14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.* 2. When you are content to part with all, to enjoy him alone. A maid will say of a man whom she loves, I will have him, though I beg my bread with him. A man will lay out his estate, in suit, for his own. 3. When you live in the world with affections free from worldly ingagements, as Pilgrims, whose hearts are at home, when their feet are travailing abroad. 2. Possesse and use, and injoy God, as your portion. Thus, 1. Live upon God, as the Israelites in *Canaan* did upon their lots and inheritances: Live upon Gods favour, in Christ, *Psal.* 30. 5. And upon his promises, *Isa.* 38. 16. Live by the faith of the Son of God, *Gal.* 2. 20. fetching all your comfort thence. 2. Walk with God, *Gen.* 5. 24. and work in God, *Joh.* 3. 21. marry in the Lord, live unto the Lord, exalting his ends, and rules, in all things. 3. Cast all your care up-

on him, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. you may try men in ſmaller things, before you truſt them with greater; eſpecially, if they be ſtrangers. But it is diſhonourable to God, if you do not, at the firſt, truſt him with all that you are, and have. When mens hearts ſink in every danger, it is from a defect, either of faith, or in faith. See how Chriſt reproved this in *Peter*, *Mat.* 14. 30, 31. *Davids* firſt recourſe was to God, and what ever means he uſed, he looked up to him, *Pſal.* 5. 3. 4. Live contentedly, when you injoy God in his Ordinances, without covetouſneſſe, *Heb.* 13. 5. and without diſcontentedneſſe becauſe of outward afflictions, or wants. *David* as he was the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael*, ſo he expreſſed a ſweet frame of ſpirit, in 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *He hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, &c.* 5. Make up all your happineſſe in God. A worldly man, when he views his houſes, lands, cattle, barns filled with corn, &c. his heart is cheared

cheared, like that rich fool in *Luke* 12. 19. But see the vanity of that joy, in the answer of God to him, ver. 20. But a true believer hath true cause of rejoycing in his portion, having such an estate in God, and Christ, and the Covenant, that he shall want nothing, *Psal.* 23. 1. his downlyings and up-risings, himself and his children are well provided; for what though his estate lyeth not in lands, or monies, or plenty of corn and cattle? he hath that which is better, for his portion. A believer is a Citizen of heaven; there is his inheritance; things on earth are added to him, onely *pro viatico*, while he is travailing thitherward.

Lam. 3. 24. *Saith my Soul.*

Having spoken of the Assertion, *the Lord is my portion*; we are now, with Christs assistance, to speak to the proof of it, *saith my Soul.* The Church proveth that the Lord is their portion, by their souls saying it. Where note, 1. The Principle of this speech, *their soul*, which sheweth that there is a mental as well as a vocal speaking:

The fool ſaith in his heart, there is no God, Pſal. 14. 1. when his tongue ſpeaketh and profeſſeth the contrary, *Tit.* 1. 16. 2. That, by an act of the ſoul reflexed upon it ſelf, they knew what their ſoul ſaid. So *David*, in *Pſal.* 16. 2. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto Jehovah, thou art my Lord.* 3. That the uſe they make hereof is, to prove two things: 1. That the Lord is their portion. 2. That they know that the Lord is their portion. 1. To prove that the Lord is their portion, they argue thus: What the Soul ſaith is a mans portion, that is his portion. But my ſoul ſaith, the Lord is my portion. Therefore the Lord is my portion. 2. To prove that they know that the Lord is their portion, they argue thus. What a man knoweth that his ſoul ſaith is his portion, that he knoweth to be his portion. But I know that my ſoul ſaith, the Lord is my portion; therefore I know that the Lord is my portion. In like manner, *David* putting up this petition, *Preſerve me, O God*, preſſeth it by this motive, *for in thee do I truſt*, and he proveth that he truſteth in God,

by

by an Apostrophe, a turning of his speech, to his soul, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my God.* And this he confirmeth from the testimony of his own soul and conscience, *Psal.* 16. 1, 2. and thence inferred; *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my Cup*, ver. 5. *q.d.* The Lord is my land and revenue, and food, he supplies all, and is himself above all, better then all, unto me.

D. When a believer knoweth that his soul saith, The Lord is his portion, he hath from thence a clear proof that the Lord is his portion. For the proving of this point, two things must be declared.

1. That a true believer may know that his soul saith, The Lord is his portion. *David* knew it, when he said, *O God! my soul trusteth in thee*, *Psal.* 17. 1. He knew that he trusted in God, as one trusteth in his treasure; and in *Psal.* 84. 2. *My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* As, when an house is on fire, and all is in danger to be lost, the owner crieth out, oh, let me have my

casket of jewels, my box of evidences, they are my treasure, the principal of my estate, I am not undone, unlesse I lose them. And then, as his desire is ardent, so his expectation is earnest for them, looking when they shall be delivered to him. Saith he, have you them? have you found them? As the Church said to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, concerning her beloved, *Cant.* 5. 8. and 3. 3. and, as any hope appeareth, he is the more incouraged to wait, yet still watching and observing if he can get the sight of them. So *David*, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more then they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning*, *Psal.* 130. 6. And, as *David* knew thus that the Lord was his portion; so may other believers, as *Paul* argues, in a like case, from *Davids* example, 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. From parity of reason, seeing we have the same helps as he had.

R. 1. From the proper excellency, or excellent property of the reasonable soul, that it can reflect, and dis-

diſcern its own internal acts; much more the renewed ſoul. 1 *Joh.* 2. 3.

R. 2. From the office and power of conſcience, to teſtifie what is within a man. This the Apoſtle notes in natural men, *Rom.* 2. 15. and in believers, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21.

R. 3. From the ſpirit of God joyning with the renewed ſpirits of believers, *Rom.* 8. 16. and 9. 1, 2. *My conſcience bearing me witneſſe in the Holy Ghoſt.* And the Holy Spirit brings into the ſoul a ſelf-evidencing light, whereby he doth manifeſt unto the renewed ſoul, that it is himſelf, and no deluſion, who teſtifieth to us our intereſt in God. *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 13. For *the Spirit is given for this end, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12.

2. That a believer, from his ſouls ſaying, the Lord is his portion, hath a good proof that the Lord is his portion. So the Church, in *Pſal.* 33. 20. from knowledge that their ſoul waiteth

eth for the Lord, proves, that he is their help and their ſhield, and from thence they infer, in ver. 21. *Our heart ſhall rejoyce in him, becauſe we have truſted in his holy name.* So *David* proved his intereſt in God, by his *ſouls thirſting for him*, *Pſal.* 63. 1. and, by his *ſouls following hard after him*, ver. 8. The ſame holds in other believers alſo.

R. 1. Becauſe the ſouls ſaying, the Lord is my portion, is the anſwering of the ſoul unto God, calling his Elect effectually, by the miniſtry of the Goſpel, out of the World and ſin and ſelf, unto himſelf, in Jeſus Chriſt. There is an outward calling, by the miniſtry of man onely, of which the Prophet ſpeaks, in *Hoſ.* 11. 7. *Though they called them to the moſt High, yet none would exalt him.* This is ineffectual, unto ſpiritual converſion, of it ſelf, without the quickening efficacies of the ſpirit. But when that is added, and worketh with the miniſtry of man (which of it ſelf onely ſoundeth in the ear) then God ſpeaketh to the heart, *Hoſ.*

2.

2. 14.] Thereby the father draweth the Elect unto his Son, *Ioh.* 6. 44, 45. Then they hear the voice of the Son of God, which they that hear, shall live, *Ioh.* 5. 25. The soul being thus quickned, answers the call of God with the obedience of faith, as *David* found, in *Psal.* 27. 8. *Thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart answered, thy face Iehovah, I do seek.* This answer is the voice of the whole soul unto God. The understanding, being illightned and fully convinced, closeth with God, in Christ, as the first Truth, and the will chooseth him as the chiefest good; the affections rest satisfied with him alone, and the whole soul placeth all its happinesse in its injoyment of him, and conformity to him. Hope waits for him, desire longeth after him, and joy delighteth in him above all things. The Lord calleth the whole soul to come unto him, that it may find true rest, in voluntarily subjecting it self under his yoke. *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. and the whole soul, in all its faculties and affections, answereth, as the Church did, in *Ier.*

3.

ſ. 22. *Lord unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.* With renouncing all other refuges, as they did, in ver. 23. according to that promiſe, in *Hoſ.* 2. 23. *I will ſay, thou art my people, and they ſhall ſay, thou art my God.*

R. 2. Becauſe the ſouls ſaying, the Lord is my portion, argues unfeigned love of God, in Chriſt. For all the affections depend on love. What a man loveth, as his portion, he deſireth to poſſeſſe and injoy; and any impediment thereof ſtirs up his anger proportionately, to his eſteem and love of it. As we ſee with what eagerneſſe and earneſtneſſe, men endeavour to remove any thing that hinders their credits, or eſtates, &c. Now, if any love God above the world, above themſelves, they will be more jealous of Gods honour then their own, and againſt that which tends to Gods diſhonour, more then againſt what croſſeth their own worldly honour. Hence will ariſe hatred againſt ſin, becauſe God hates it, both in our ſelves, *Pſal.* 97. 10. and in o-

thers

thers, *Rev.* 2. 6. Anger is against particulars, but hatred is general. Anger seeks revenge with moderation, in proportion to the wrong done us, but hatred seeks the destruction of its object. Anger is placable, but hatred is implacable. And according to the degree of mens love to any thing, will be their fear of being deprived of it, and separated from it, and of all causes and signes of alienation from it.

R. 3. Because the souls saying, The Lord is my portion, importeth the highest actings of the soul upon God. When *Iob* said, *the things that my soul refused to touch*, *Job* 6. 7. he shewed the greatest detestation of them; and when he said, *my soul chuseth death rather than life*, *Iob* 7. 15, he shewed a most vehement desire. And when the Lord said, *I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul*. *Ier.* 32. 41. he shewed the firmnesse of his purpose. So, when the soul saith, The Lord is my portion, it argues the most full and firm cleaving

ving of a believer unto God, with purpose of heart, as *Barnabas* exhorted them to do, in *Acts* 11. 23. Else men do not return to him, nor cleave to him, as to the most High, *Hos.* 7. 16. unless they turn to him with all their heart, *Joel* 2. 12. and love him with all their heart, *Deut.* 30. 6. For, it is by such a love that faith workes, which is a believing with all the heart, *Acts* 8. 37. and produceth obedience from the heart, *Rom.* 6. 17. which is done when all the faculties and affections of the soul do open themselves, and stand open, to give entertainment unto God, in Christ, as the King of glory, *Psal.* 24. 7. When the Keyes of the whole house, and every room in it are delivered up for the use and service of a King, he is entertained like a King. Inferiour guests are content, one with one room, another with another, and sometimes two have but one room, yea, one bed for them both. But the King must have all. So it is in this case, when the God of glory appeared unto *Abraham*, and called him,

Abra-

Abraham obeyed him, without reſervation, *Acts* 7. 2, 3. So muſt we, yea, ſo will all, whoſe ſoules ſay, the Lord is their portion.

Uſe 1. For inſtruction, in four particulars. 1. Hence learn how a man may know when afflictions are ſanctified and bleſſed unto him, *i. e.* when the eye of the ſoul is, by them, turned, 1. Upward, to look unto God, for an intereſt in him, as their portion. 2. Inward, to reflect upon the inward actings of the ſoul, that they may know their intereſt in God, as their portion. Indeed afflictions of themſelves work the contrary, to eſtrange us from God, and from our ſelves, and Satan labours to foment and increaſe a ſeparation of the ſoul from God, and a diviſion, and diſtraction of the ſoul within it ſelf. Therefore it is by an over-ruling power and ſanctifying efficacy of Gods ſpirit, when they cauſe us to return unto the Lord, *Hoſ.* 6. 1. and to our ſelves, *Luke* 15. 17, 18. It is a ſure rule of diſcerning ones ſelf to be in the ſtate of grace, when he finds that

every

every condition brings him neerer to God, and every ſanctifying gift of grace is quickned to its proper function, to turn the faculty and affection of the ſoul, in which it is planted, unto God, *Rom.* 8. 28, 29. God is a pure act, alwayes acting, and every one, the neerer he comes to God, the more gracious frame of ſpirit he hath, and the more ſpiritual affections, and ſuitable actings of them, ſweetly iſſuing from thence.

2. Learn hence a profitable uſe of ſpiritual ſoliloquies, which are a mans ſpeaking within himſelf, to himſelf, about ſpiritual things. *David* preſcribes communing with a mans own heart, to further his repentance, *Pſal.* 4. 4. and himſelf made uſe of it, to quicken his faith, *Pſal.* 42. 5. So the Church in my Text, in times of affliction, being driven out of their creature-comforts, and expectations, they communed, and parlied with their own ſouls, to cleer unto themſelves their intereſt in God, as their portion, and to excite their faith and hope in him unto exerciſe.

3. Learn

3. Learn hence, not to rest in outward profession, in words, that the Lord is your portion. Many hypocrites say so, whose hearts cleave to some thing else, as their portion; some to their sinful wills, and wayes. They draw neer unto God with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from him. Such were those in *Hos.* 8. 2, 3. *Israel will cry unto me, my God, we know thee*, when, *Israel hath cast off the thing that is good*; even God himself, in whom and from whom is all good, and the good word of God, and the rules thereof; though they thus departed from him, yet, in their distresse, they were ready to claim an interest in him. Others, to their worldly objects. They *lay up treasures for themselves on the earth*, and *there their hearts are*, *Mat.* 6. 19, 21. *Their belly is their God*, and portion, *that mind earthly things*, *Phil.* 3. 19. These steal away their hearts from God, even while they are hearing the Word, *Ezek.* 33. 31. All, to one idol, or other, like those of whom the Prophet speaks, in *Isa.*

57.

57. 6. *Among the ſmooth ſtones of ſtreams is thy portion; they, they are thy lot.* A woful portion have all ſuch, for at preſent, *their portion is curſed in the earth*, Job. 24. 18. and, for the future, *God will rain upon them, ſnares, fire, and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt; this ſhall be the portion of their Cup*, Pſal. 11. 6. Again,

2. Reſt not in ſome occaſional ſpeeches of ſome one affection alone. *Balaam* had a tranſient deſire that his latter end might be like theirs, who had the Lord for their portion, *Numb.* 23. 10. This is but the ſaying of one aſſertion, for a ſhort time. Nothing is to be accounted as ſaid by the ſoul, unleſſe all the faculties and affections of the ſoul conſent in it, acting ſuitably, *Pſal.* 103. 1.

4. Learn hence, to make out for an intereſt in God, as your portion. This is to be had onely by and in Jeſus Chriſt, *Joh.* 20. 17. *For it pleaſed the Father, that in Chriſt*, God incarnate, *all fulneſſe ſhould dwell*, *Col.* 1. 19. and, that *out of his fulneſſe we all ſhould receive, and grace*

for

for grace, *Joh.* 1.16. So that Christ is the immediate fountain of all spiritual blessings unto the Elect, *Eph.* 1. 3. Gods next end, in this dispensation, is, *that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father*, *Joh.* 5. 23. which they do, when they come to the Father by the Son, *Joh.* 14. 6. and therefore come to the Son first, seeking to have an interest in him, and then in the Father, by union and communion with him, through faith in the Son of God, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. Let those who are out of Christ, see their misery, in that state, and the remedy thereof in Christ, and accordingly value him above all things, *Rev.* 3. 17, 18. *Mat.* 13. 45. Let those that have him, seek more full communion with him, prizing that above all things, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. and answerably prize the word, as *David*, who said unto God, *the law of thy mouth is better unto me then thousands of Gold and Silver*, *Psal.* 119. 72. See that the word be mixed with faith in your hearts, to receive Christ thereby, as God offereth him unto

you

you in his Word, *Joh.* 1. 12. Shew it to be so, really, and not in outward profession onely, by setting your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. and by your driving an heavenly trade, in this world, *Phil.* 3. 20.

Use 2. For comfort to all who can thus say, The Lord is their portion; *i.e.* to all true believers, who know that their soul saith the Lord is their portion; be exhorted to rejoyce in your portion, *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes, and again, I say, rejoyce, Phil.* 4. 4. Have you plenty of outward things? Rejoyce not in them, but in the Lord, *Ier.* 9. 23, 24. In him alone you have fully enough. There is a vast difference between *Iacobs* portion and *Esau's*, though the Translation holdeth forth each of them, as saying, I have enough, yet the Original varieth their expressions, *Esau* said, יש-לי-רב, *I have much*, *Gen.* 33. 9. but *Jacob* said יש-לי-כל, I *have all*, ver. 11. *Esau* had much in worldly things, but not enough:

Jacob

Jacob had enough in God, who was his All-sufficient portion. Are you in any want? *Habent omnia qui habent habentem omnia.* They cannot want any thing, who have him to be their portion, who hath all things. In wants of outward things, say with *David*, *Psal.* 23. 1. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall want nothing*; and with the Church, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossome, nor fruits be in the vine, and the fields yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and no herds in the stalls, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* In spiritual wants, the God of all grace, wisdom, power, and goodnesse, is your God and portion; you have all in him, and shall have all that is good for you from him, *Psal.* 84. 11. Are you in fear of dangers? Say, as *David*, in *Psal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear, &c. Psal.* 27. 1, 2, 3. Again, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though

though the earth be moved, &c. *Psal.* 46. 1, 2, 3, 4. Lastly, are you in as great distresse as *David* was, in 1 *Sam.* 30. 3, 4, 5, 6? Yet even then take the course that he took. What was that? *David* comforted himself in the Lord his God. So do you, rejoyce in this your portion. For it is, 1. All-sufficient. 2. Everlasting.

Lam. 3. 24. *Therefore will* I *hope in him,*

We have already spoken of two parts of the Text; the Assertion, *the Lord is my portion*, and the proof of it; *saith my soul.* We now proceed to the third, the inference, which the Church draws from the premises; *therefore will* I *hope in him.* In which words three particulars are to be noted. 1. The reason, whereupon their hope was grounded [*therefore.*] 2. The resolution of their will to act according to that reason [I *will.*] 3. The act it self resolved upon, together with the proper object of it [*hope in him.*] For the first, the reason, whereupon

upon their hope was grounded. This illative particle, *therefore*, notes the result of a discourse in the minds of believers, whereby they compare one thing with another, and gather one thing from another; and thence conclude to act suitably to the truest and best reason. Faith is an understanding grace, and knowes what use to make of the souls interest in God. When a man hath God for his portion, and knows it, thence faith inferreth it is my duty, and it is for my good to hope in him: Therefore I will hope in him. Reason of it self, in this corrupt state of fallen man, cannot teach men to hope in God. But when God hath in the word of promise given himself to us to be our portion, and faith hath closed with him, as our portion; and the word telleth us it is our duty, and for our good to hope in him, then faith seeth good reason that we should hope in him. Faith useth reason, though not as the ground, yet as a sanctified instrument, to find out Gods grounds, that it may rely upon him. He believes

best, who best knowes, why he believes, and he best hopes in God, who can give the best reasons for his hoping in him. The affections, though they have not reason raised in them, yet they are thus farre reasonable, that, in all that are godly-wise, they are raised up, and laid down, guided, and actuated, by sanctified reason, which is the highest and best reason.

Doct. They that hope in God aright, have their hope in him raised, and strengthened by good and strong reasons. Reasons fetched from God, and from the soules knowing its interest in him, as his portion, are good and strong reasons, for our hoping in him; and such are the reasons which the Church, in my Text, gives of their hoping in God. They considered Gods All-sufficiency, in himself, and to every one that hath him for his portion, and what interest themselves had in him, through faith in Christ, and thereupon conclude; therefore will I hope in him. So may all believers.

From the inseparable connection of hope with faith: Faith believes

lieves in Christ, and in God through Christ, upon Gods authority in his word, and what faith believes, hope expects. The reasons for a believers hoping in God, are as good and strong, as for his believing in him. For, as, naturally, beams come from the Sun, and branches from the root; so, by spiritual discourse, one truth issueth from another; and, as the Sun and its beams, the roots and branches, are all of one nature; so the grounds of comfortable truths, and reasons taken from those grounds, are both of the same divine authority in themselves. Though in us, discourse is apt to be so troubled, in times of Temptation, that we cannot see how one truth ariseth upon another; yet so far as faith sees God to be our portion, the soul sees good and strong reason for our hoping in him for all good, that may suit all our needs, in the best season.

A. 2. From the convincing light, which the spirit of God bringeth into the soul, when he worketh faith and hope in it. It is the office and work

of the ſpirit, to convince, and, by convincing, to comfort, *Joh.* 16.7,8. Conviction is a clear and infallible demonſtration, and comfort is a demonſtration, with application unto us, of better and ſtronger reaſons to raiſe us up, then thoſe are which tend to caſt down our ſouls. When the ſpirit convinceth, he bringeth ſuch a full and powerful light into the ſoul, as ſilenceth all diſputes and cavils, and cauſeth the ſoul to yeeld, as overcome by the evidence and authority of the light and truth brought into it. Light hath a convincing property and force in it. When we ſee the light of the Sun, we know it is day, and will not believe thoſe that ſhall deny it, though they were ten thouſands, becauſe the conviction hereof is undeniable, it is an unreaſonable thing to deny it. So the ſpirit of God brings an undeniable light into the ſoul, which diſcovers the vanity of thoſe windings, and turnings, whereof thens deceitful hearts are ſo full, that there can be no thorough conviction, and effectual to ſalvation, without the efficacy of

the Holy Spirit. A common conviction there may be, by the light of nature, or of a natural conscience, or of some common transient work of the Holy Spirit, but that is but weak: For either it discovers but little, as a little spark shews little light, not enough to lighten the room, by overcomming the darkneſſe, and turning it into light; or the light, which it shews, it shews but weakly, like a flash of lightning, or a blaze in straw, that is soon out again. But saving conviction is a greater and stronger light, like the light of the Sun, which is a full and powerful light. This is onely from the sanctifying spirit of God. This light shewes the evil of sin, and the good of the contrary, in their spiritual nature, and compasse, and drawes the will answerably, from the one to the other, by converting grace, *Acts* 26. 18. This light is abiding in the renewed soul. Thus the Church, in my Text, was convinced and comforted, in their great distresse, by the spirit and word of God, so as they could hold forth good and strong rea-

reasons, whereupon their hope was strengthened, and their hearts were comforted in sad houres.

Use 1. For Instruction, two-fold; 1. Learn hence to examine and trie the reasons, whereby you are moved to act; whether they they be good, or not good, reason is a beam of Gods light. What comes from God, carrieth the soul to God; Therefore that which drawes the soul from God cannot be a good reason, it is not right reason, but falsely called reason, it is not from faith, but from unbelief, not good but evil, *Heb.* 3. 12. Hence no good reason can be given for any sin. What ever reasons are pretended for it, they are not according to Gods Logick, but the Devils Sophistrie, *Jam.* 1. 22. Παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτούς, They deceive themselves with false Syllogisms. You may find in *Jer.* 3. 15. three Topicks, from whence all such arguings are fetcht, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, the three great enemies of Gods glory, and of Christs Kingdom in us; yet they will pretend their good intention for Gods ho-

honour, when they seek to themselves worldly profits by disobeying Gods commandement. So did *Saul*, but *Samuel* resisted all his false pleas, 1 *Sam.* 15. 21, 22, 23. See how the Scripture taxeth such as encourage themselves to sin, that good may come thereon, *Rom.* 3. 7, 8. *Job* sharply took up his friends for this, in *Job* 13. 7. *Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?* yet thus the Devil never ceaseth actively instruments against Christ; *the time cometh* (saith Christ, in *John* 16. 2.) *that whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service.* There are that argue from worldly advantages to encouragement to sin, *Prov.* 1. 13. But Christ shews the pernicious delusion of such reasonings, in *Mat.* 16. 26. others from the pleasure of carnal liberty, but *Peter* shews the falsenesse of that plea, in 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. others from worldly preferment of wicked men, in *Mal.* 3. 15. which the Prophet confuteth in verse 18. Some from Gods patience, which God himself answereth, in *Eccles.* 8. 11, 12, 13. Such as these

are the *συζητησεις*, the reasonings of natural men, *Rom.* 1.21. which should warn all men to deny their carnal wisdom, which is enmity against God, *Rom.* 8.7. 2. Learn hence to examine and try the goodnesse and strength of the reasons, whereupon it is grounded, remembring that rule, in, 1 *Pet.* 3.15. *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* You say, you hope in God, If you have no reason for it; its a foolish unreasonable hope. If you have but slight reasons; its a vain hope. And such is hope of the most: one grounds his hope of salvation upon his creation; saying, I am Gods creature, and he hath not made me to damne me: Therefore, I hope he will save me. See the delusion of this plea, 1. Are not the Devils Gods creatures? yet they are damned. 2. Though Gods end in making you, was not to damne you, yet your impenitency in sin, and unbelief will damne you. 3. See the Lords own refutation of this plea, in *Isa.* 27.11. Another grounds his hope

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of blessednesse upon Gods blessing him, as he calls it, with worldly successe, and prosperity. But Christ shews the vanity of this hope in that rich man in Hell, *Luke* 16. 25. and by telling us that *it is that they shall be destroyed for ever*, *Psal.* 92. 7. Gods end in prospering such in the world, is like *Hesters* end in feasting *Haman*. Another grounds his hope that he shall have heaven hereafter, because he hath had his Hell, through afflictions, in this life. But such consider not what the Word saith concerning *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Jude* 7. *Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*. What misery wicked impenitent sinners suffer here, is but a beginning and pledge to them of Hell hereafter. Another grounds his hope upon his Christian priviledges and performances. But this is plentifully refuted in Scripture, by *Johns* speech to the *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 3. 9. and *Pauls* to the *Romans*, *Rom.* 2. 28. and concerning himself, *Phil.* 3. 7. Others ground their hope upon Gods mercy, though they continue in their sins. This indeed is

a good reason for hope, in those that confesse and forsake their sin, *Prov.* 28. 13. But for those that abuse this mercy to the hardning of themselves in sin by it, see how the Lord thunders against such, in *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. Others ground their hope upon their own self-flattering and self-deceiving thoughts of themselves. Such may see their own folly and madnesse, by what the Scripture saith, in *Prov.* 28. 26. and *Gal.* 6. 3. Let all such, and the like, renounce their ungrounded hope, which, like *that broken reed of Egypt*, *Isa.* 36. 6. will at once both fail them, and ruin them. Till you have an interest in God and Christ, as your portion, you are *without hope*, *Eph.* 2. 12. Therefore the first work of the Spirit, in the soul, by the Gospel, and one great end of the ministry thereof, is, to make way for true faith and hope, by *casting down* those λογισμους, *reasonings, and bringing into Captivity every thought*, παν νοημα, every sophistical reasoning, *to the obedience of Christ*. 2 Cor. 10. 5.

Use.

Use 2. For Exhortation to Believers, being under temptations and afflictions, whether outward or inward, to improve the reasons, which faith suppleth, for the quickening and strengthening of their hope in God. For, in such times, faith is put to it to use reasons. Indeed the soul needeth not that help so much, when it is in a clear and quiet state, for upon its close and sweet communion with God, in Christ, and from some likeness between the renewed soul and God, it presently, and without prævious discourse, runneth to God, as by a supernatural instinct; as, by natural instinct, the child runneth to his natural parents in danger, and distresse, with confidence. But, in dark times of great afflictions, and temptations, faith is put to use Arguments, and reasons to quicken and strengthen hope. Accordingly, study the grounds of hope, and improve them for your help. 1. Such as may be supplied from the inward store laid up in the soul, as the Church did in my Text. 2. Such as are, or may be, suggested by others.

Harken,

Harken, and yield to them, and cloſe with them. For, thus you will ſhew that you have a frame of ſpirit ſuitable to any holy and comfortable truth, that ſhall be preſented and applied to it: There is a principle in every renewed ſpirit, that cloſeth with whatever commeth from Gods ſpirit, that readily claimes acquaintance and kindred with it, as comming from the ſame bleſſed ſpring, the holy Spirit. When *Aſaph* found the contrary in himſelf, that his *ſoul refuſed comfort, and he remembred God and was troubled*, *Pſal.* 77. 23. he ſaw, and *ſaid, this is mine infirmity*, ver. 10. He ſaw that it aroſe from a ſickneſſe, a ſpiritual diſeaſe, and diſtemper in his ſoul. While paſſion and temptation diſturbe the ſoul, they hinder the exerciſe of ſpiritual reaſon: As we ſee in *David*, who *ſaid, in his haſte, all men are liars*, *Pſal.* 116. 10, 11. This he ſaw afterward, when his ſpiritual reaſon had recovered it ſelf, which before by his diſtemper was hindred in its working; then he admired God for his benefits toward him,

him, notwithstanding his provocation of him to have taken a contrary course with him, ver. 12. Labour therefore, 1. That your mind, which is the seat of principles, be well furnished with divine and spiritual truths. For false principles can never produce true comforts. As onely truth sanctifieth, *Joh.* 17. 17. So truth onely truly comforteth. There is the same reason of both. For it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, both to sanctifie, and to comfort: And the Holy spirit is the Spirit of Truth, *Joh.* 16. 13. Therefore he will not work by a falshood, but onely by Truth, either sanctification, or consolation. 2. See that your understanding διάνοια, the dianoetical, discoursing faculty, which is the seat of conclusions, be used to deduce from spiritual principles, such spiritual conclusions as they are apt to beget. For, by false reasonings, in times of affliction and temptation. 1. Believers hinder their faith and hope, when they reason too much from sense and present feeling, *Isa.* 40. 27. and 49. 14. *Ezek.* 33. 10.

2. Others

to God, to ground false comforts from the light of a fire kindled by themselves, *Isa.* 50. 11. But if you renounce such reasonings, you flie to Christ and his righteousness alone, for your reconciliation with God, through faith in his blood, with true repentance, then you may reason with God, *Isa.* 1. 18. though not in your own strength or worth, *Luke* 17. 10. yet you may reason with him in faithful fervent prayer, as Jacob did, where-by he prevailed and got both a new blessing and a new name, ver. 28. Fervent prayers are strong reasonings with God in Christ's strength and for his sake. This will be well pleasing to God unto us, when God calls for our obedience, he adds perswasives to his precepts, and reasoneth with us as well as commandeth us, so he allowes us, in prayer, to add perswasions to our petitions, and to reason with him as well as intreat him. Once, it must be our care that we reason from right Topicks, and heads of Arguments. Such as these, 1. From the infiniteness and freeness of Gods mercy,

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and grace. 2. From the immutable firmneſſe of his Covenant and promiſes in Chriſt. 3. From our indigence and dependance upon him. 4. From the concernments of his glory, and our neceſſary good. In ſuch reaſonings of faith and hope, the ſpirit, ſtrength, and life of prayer conſiſteth. Such pleadings, in the name of Chriſt, God approveth and requireth, *Iſa.* 43. 26. 3. See that the heart, which is the ſeat of practical knowledge be fitted to order the converſation and practice, by ſound principles, in the mind, and right concluſions, in the underſtanding; that mental diſcourſe may not vaniſh in meer empty ſpeculation. As, in my Text, *The Lord is my portion*, is the principle laid up in their mind; *ſaith my ſoul*, is the proof it; the concluſion to be from thence inferred, is, Therefore it is my duty to hope in him. This knowledge becomes practical, when the heart ſo receiveth it, that the will comes to a reſolution; *therefore I will hope in him.* Which is the next particular to be ſpoken to.

Lam.

Lam. 3. 24. *Therefore I will hope in him.*

The reason alledged by the Church is, not so much an Argument to convince the judgment (though it contains that also, as we have before proved) as a motive to induce and incline the will to hope in God. For trusting and hoping in God, being a relying and waiting upon God for future good, do especially carry the will to him. As the understanding is led with truth, so the will is led with the goodnesse of things. As the judgment must be convinced of Gods ability, so the heart must be sweetned with his love and readinesse to do us good, for the future, that we may hope in him. For meer knowledge and discourse cannot draw the heart to trust and hope in God, except it hath a relish of his goodnesse. Therefore *David* saith, *O taste and see that the Lord is good*, *Psal.* 34. 8. Those reasons are most prevailing to incline the will towards God, which are drawn from the

the goodnesse of God, whereby the heart is opened and enlarged to expect all good, and nothing but good from him, who is goodnesse it self, and our God and portion in Jesus Christ. This relish is wrought in the renewed soul, by the spirit of faith, together with a light to discern our interest in God.

Dest. The reasons whereby believers are quickned and strengthened to hope in God, do strongly incline their will to resolve to hope in him. This is obvious frequently in Scripture; that when the will is inclined to any spiritual good, it is upon spiritual reasons, the Spirit of God joyning his efficacy therewith, and leaving a powerful relish of that good in the soul. This you may see in *Psal.* 40. & *Lam.* 3. 24. *Jer.* 3. 22. and in sundry Texts.

R. From the different manner of the souls guiding the will, and the bodily members. The soul swayeth the will and affections, as counsellors do a well ordered state, by propounding reasons to them. But the

soul

rule governeth the bodily members, as a Master doth his slaves, by meer commands: The will moves the hands and feet, &c. by command, or without giving them Reasons. But the will and affections may move without reason, or at least against reason. God made man an understanding creature, indued with rational faculties, that his understanding should be the leading faculty, and the will to be the appetite to follow according to reason. Therefore it moves to and fro, as good is presented to it by the illightned mind, or understanding, as the most pleasant and agreeable: the reason of it is to move the freedom and willingness of the heart is good or wrong, ready to obey it, or not: this is therefore said to be free, because, when it moves, out of a true judgement, it moves one way, or, out of a false, it moves another way, yet in both it moves. In a manner suitable to its own condition. For this reason it is that God commands so far forth in his word, as to give us to understand reason is to have in man, that we might have reason

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thereunto, by suitable reasons.

2. From the manner of the spirits putting forth his efficacy, to incline the wils of believers to hope in God. The heart of man naturally, is not apt, but averse, hereunto, even when the understanding sees good reasons for it. Therefore the will must necessarily be renewed and changed. This change consists in altering the bent and inclination of the will, which the spirit of God doth, by bringing into the soul a new light, and powerful influence. A new light, whereby we are inabled to see other things, or the same truths in a more spiritual and effectual manner, those impediments being removed, which might hinder the evidence of spiritual truths, and the judgment being fully convinced, that we might know *things* not onely notionally, but practically; *as we ought to know them* 1 Cor. 8. 2. This is that illumination and revelation, whereof the scripture speaks in *Ephes.* 1. 17. *Col.* 1. 9. *Job* 5. 10. An powerful influence, Jesus Christ hath opened

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the understandings of his Disciples, *Luke* 24. 45. And caused their hearts to burn within them, when he spake unto them, ver. 32. By this powerful influence the spirit makes every faculty and affection of the renewed soul, to work unto supernatural ends, and objects, according to its proper manner. As the soul, in the bodily eye, causeth it to see; and, in the ear, causeth it to hear; and, in the tongue, causeth it to speak, &c. So the spirit, in the mind, causeth it to understand aright; and, in every affection, causeth it freely to choose and cleave unto Christ, and to God in him; and, in every affection, causeth it to move towards Christ and God, in such a manner and way of working, as is suitable to its nature. This the Holy Spirit doth, by creating and implanting in-dwelling lively spiritual gifts of grace in the soul, which he thereby sanctifieth and lifteth up unto God in Christ; the faculties and affections, which were by nature set upon the world and sin, and self, being now, by grace set upon things above, and so

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are said to be quickned and made alive unto God. Hence every spiritual gift of grace, whereby any faculty and affection of the soul is sanctified, is called the spirit of that faculty and affection. The sanctified disposition of the mind is called, *the spirit of a sound mind*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. The gift of faith is called, *the spirit of faith*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. So the gift of love, and of the fear of the Lord, is called, *the spirit of love*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. and *the spirit of the fear of the Lord*, *Isa.* 11. 2. Because the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the soul, infuseth those gifts into it, and so renoweth the faculties and affections of it, *Psal.* 51. 10.. And, 2. Quickeneth and exciteth these spiritual gifts, and by them the faculties and affections unto spiritual acts. Without this quickening influence, those spiritual gifts would be, in the soul, un-acted, as the bodily senses are, in sleep, or as a ship in a calme, at Sea, *ad actum agimus*. We act, but instrumentally, subordinately under the spirit, who is the principal, efficient and agent, in

all spiritual good. We act, but not in our strength, nor in the strength of grace received, but from the quickening, strengthening influence of the Spirit. As trees, though they have in them a seminal vertue, yet, except they be helped by influence from heaven, cannot bring forth their fruits; so it is with these spiritual *trees of righteousness*, as believers are called, in *Isa.* 61. 3. *It is God that worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure*, *Phil.* 2. 13.

Use. For Instruction, threefold: 1. Hence we may learn the true Reason, why the sudden resolutions of many to reforme this and that, and to do this and that particular, are so weak and mutable, *as the morning cloud, and as the early dew*, *Hos.* 6. 4. which soon vanish. Some, at an heart-searching and soul-piercing Sermon, are affected, as that young man, till they are put upon such conditions, as their predominant lust will not accept, *Mat.* 19. 16, 22. Others, in some strong convictions and awakenings of conscience, are affected,

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as *Saul* was in his unrighteous dealing with *David*, and do purpose against it, as he did, yet afterward with him return to their former sin again, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. with 26. 2. Some, in great sicknesses, others, in great dangers by Land, or Sea, resolve that they will become new men, if God will be pleased to spare them, or deliver them, this time; of whom the Lord may complain, as he did of the children of *Israel* in *Judg.* 10. 11, 12, 13. The reason is, because they are unregenerate, they are in their natural state. Such may have a notional light, in their minds, and awakenings of their natural consciences, and stirrings in their affections, and sudden purposes toward God, and Christ, and spiritual things, from a transient work of the spirit, exciting their innate principle of self-love thereunto, for a time; during which, they are in a better mood, but not in a better state, as in sicknesses, the fits may be altered, yet the sickness remain in its strength. New resolutions, in an un-renewed heart, are like seed in an

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unsuitable soil, which prospers not, but withers, and dies, and comes to nothing, at last. How many such are now in Hell; where their remembrance of such fruitlesse, ineffectual purposes gnaweth their consciences, as a never-dying worm, and torments them for ever.

2. Hence we may learn, whence it is that true believers have such firm resolutions of cleaving to God, in Christ, and of hoping in him, when he hideth his face from them, in great afflictions, *Isa.* 8.17. *Ion.* 2.4. The reason of it is, because their hearts are purified by faith, *Acts* 15.9. which is seated principally, in the will, whereby it receiveth Christ, *Ioh.* 1.12. *Rom.* 5.17. 1 *Tim.* 1.5. and is the effect of the operation of God, *Col.* 2.12. by his exceeding greatnesse of power, *Eph.* 1.19, 20. whose peculiar glory it is, to perswade the heart, *Gen.* 9.27. and to draw the will, to come unto Christ, *Ioh.* 6.44. which he doth, by changing the disposition, inclination, and bent of it. If you offer green boughs unto

Swine;

Swine; they regard them not, but trample them under their feet; but if their nature were changed into the nature of sheep, then they would be drawn to them. This is done by the spirit of God. 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. Before regeneration, the will is in bondage unto sin, but, being united unto Christ, in regeneration, *the Son makes us free indeed*, *Joh.* 8. 36. Then the will freely moveth towards God, in Christ, by faith and hope; as a man, though he cannot give life to himself being dead, yet, when he is made alive, he can move himself, from a principle of life in him. So much faith as a man hath, so much free-will he hath to hope in God, in the worst times. So far as his spiritual grace and strength goes, so far he is able, by the concourse of Gods spirit, which he usually joyns with the ability he hath given to his people, that it may be quickened and actuated thereby. A man cannot act his natural abilities, he cannot move his hand or foot, unlesse he be assisted with Gods general

concourse: So a man can do nothing in spiritual actions, without special concourse of grace in Christ, *Joh.* 15. 5. But, being assisted, with a supply of the Spirit, proportioned to the exigencies of services to be performed, and of temptations to be resisted, and of corruptions to be mortified, he may say, as *Paul* did, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things, through Christ, which strengtheneth me.*

3. Hence we may learn, in what manner believers in Christ resolve to hope in God. This resolution in them may be known and distinguished from the resolutions of others, by four characters or properties.

1. It is a sanctified resolution. It is the effect of Gods Holy Spirit dwelling in them, and removing far from them vanity and lying, *Pro.* 30. 8. that is, vain and false apprehensions of things, and turning their whole soul unto God, in Christ, to seek all their good in him. This is the effect of converting grace, as the Prophet shews, in *Isa.* 17. 7, 8. *At that day shall a man look to his Maker, &c.*

2. Its

2. It is an obedient resolution, in answer to Gods calling them to himself, in Christ, *Psal.* 27. 8. it is the yielding up of their wills to be ruled by Gods will, *Psal.* 110. 3. When mens wils are not subdued and conformed unto Gods will, they are, in times of affliction, like sullen birds in a Cage, which beat themselves to death; like peevish froward children, which will be pleased with nothing, if their wills be crossed in any thing. But when the will is subdued unto Gods will, by the spirit, through the ministry of the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. then we can say, with *Asaph*, *It's good for me to draw near to God*, *Psal.* 73. *ult.* And, with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. *Let the Lord do with me what seemeth good in his own eyes.*

3. It is a rational resolution, led by the best reasons. For, faith believes in Christ, and in God, through Christ upon Gods Authority and faithfulnesse and truth, in his Word and Covenant. Hence it ministreth reasons to quicken and strengthen hope, from Gods All-sufficiency, and love, in Christ, and faithfulnesse in his pro-

miles to expect and wait upon God for all good from him, suitable to our needs, in the best seasons: and to resolve, as *Job* did, who said, *though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*, *Iob* 13. 15. and (if they see cause to complain) to complain, not of God, but to God, nor of their crosses, but of the crossenesse of their wils to Gods holy will; as *Ephraim* did, in *Ier.* 31. 18.

It is a dependent resolution, relying upon God, in Christ, for ability to hope in him, *Isa.* 26. 12. and therefore praying to him, as *David* did, in *Psal.* 138. *ult.* and to keep it ever in the purpose of their hearts, 1 *Chron.* 29. 18. with true self-denial of any sufficiency of themselves, so much, as to think any thing, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. Thus they become *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, *Eph.* 6. 10.

Lam. 3. 24. *Hope in him.*

The last thing to be spoken to, is the duty resolved upon, illustrated by its object, which is, to exercise *divine hope*;

hope; for so I call that hope, which hath God for its object and efficient, who is therefore called *the God of hope*, *Rom.* 15. 13. and for its ground, the Word of God, as this hope hath, *Psal.* 119. 49. The word in the Original, יחל translated *hope*, signifieth, *to expect*; which is the formal act of hope. Hence we may gather a definition of this divine hope. It is a lively, spiritual in-dwelling gift of grace, whereby believers are inclined to expect, in and from God, what ever good they want, and he hath promised. 1. For the general nature of it, which it hath in common with other fruits of the spirit; it is, 1. A lively gift of grace, an holy quality, or habit, or disposition, freely given of God; hereby it is distinguished from that hope, which is meerly a natural affection. For, the natural affection of hope is, by corrupt nature, set upon a mans self, and earthly things, and cannot savour the things of God; and therefore is said to be dead. It's an hope that hath *given up the Ghost*, *Job* 11. 20. Natural men are big

with hopes, as they that are *with child*, and are in *pain*, to bring their hopes to the birth; but instead thereof, they *bring forth wind*. After long looking and hard labour, all is but a gripe of wind, like a fit of the collick, as the Prophet intimates, in *Isa.* 26. 18. But, by this gift of grace, which I call divine hope, that affection is sanctified, and lifted up unto God, and set upon him and heavenly things, and so quickened and made alive unto God. Whence believers are said to be *begotten again to a lively hope*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. This gift of grace I describe further by two properties: 1. *Spiritual*, it is a spiritual gift, for two reasons: 1. Because it is created and perfected in believers *by the power of the Holy Spirit*, *Rom.* 15. 13. 2. Because it makes them *spiritual*, in whom it is wrought, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. and fit instruments for Gods spiritual service, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. 2. *In-dwelling*; I call it an in-dwelling gift: 1. Because it abides in all that are in Christ. Union with Christ doth not extinguish it in believers. There-

Therefore, when believers are ſaid to be *dead*, in *Col.* 3. 3. it is not meant, in reſpect of ſanctifying gifts of grace, inhærent in them, as if they were dead, and the faculties and affections of their ſouls were immediately acted by the Holy Spirit; but, in reſpect of ſin, they are *dead unto ſin, but alive unto God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 6. 11. 2. Becauſe it it is not a tranſient work upon us, nor abiding in the Holy Ghoſt, though he abideth in us (for no created gifts or qualities abide in him; for whatſoever is in him is himſelf) but it is wrought, preſerved, increaſed, actuated, and perfected in us by the Holy Ghoſt, as all other ſanctifying inhærent gifts of grace are. So much for the general nature of this divine hope. 2. The ſubject recipient of it are believers. For this hope is grounded on faith in the promiſes, *Gal.* 5. 5. Therefore, in the Old Teſtament, truſting in God, and hoping in God, are promiſcuouſly uſed in one and the ſame ſenſe, and in 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. hope is put for faith. For they both act to-

together inseparably, in supporting the soul, in times of affliction; yet, in their manner of acting, there are some differences between them. For, 1. The adæquate object of faith is the whole Word of God, holding forth good and evil, promises and threatnings, blessings and cursings. But the object of hope is good onely. 2. Faith, in its relying upon the promises, looks to the word promising, and to the Authority of God, the promiser; but hope to the good promised, and to the goodnesse of the promiser. 3. Faith looks to all times, past, present, and to come, and makes future things present, *Psal.* 60. 7. But hope looks onely at good things, and at those onely as future. 4. Faith looks at God, as the first truth; hope relies on God, as the chief good. 3. The formal act of hope is expectation. Therefore it is said to *look for him*, in a way of waiting for him, *Isa.* 8. 17. The Greek word ἀποκαραδοκία, is well translated, *earnest expectation*, in *Rom.* 8. 19. *Phil.* 1. 20. it being a metaphor taken from the bodily

dily gestures of those who look for some person or thing, with earnest desire, and assurance, lifting up and putting forth their head, stretching out their neck, fixing their eyes with intention and observation, to shew the strength, firmnesse, and certainty of this hope. For the object of this divine hope is principally God himself, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. and secondarily, all those means and degrees, whereby believers come unto God, ver. 13. unto whom this hope looketh, with waiting upon him for all the good they want, and he hath promised: So that this hope is certain and infallible, being objectated upon God, founded in faith, and grounded upon the promises of *God, who cannot lie*, *Tit.* 1. 2. Hence it supporteth the heart, in the worst times.

Doct. Hoping in God aright is a special means of supporting the soul against discouragement, in times of great afflictions. The Scriptures are innumerable which confirm and prove this truth: And it must be so for these Reasons.

R. 1. From the formal object of divine hope, which is God himself, in whom alone is to be found all ability and readineſſe to do good unto thoſe that hope in him, and wait upon him, in ſuch times. 1. All ability to help is in God alone. Princes are of greateſt abilities among men, yet we are forbidden to *truſt in Princes, in whom there is no help*, *Pſal.* 146. 3. Men commonly think themſelves happy in the favour and protection of Princes: But they are deceived. Therefore it is added, in ver. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* For no creature hath ability, of it ſelf, and what ever ability God hath put into any, yet the exerciſe and ſucceſſe of it depends on God alone. *Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it: Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain. It is in vain to riſe up early, to go to bed late, to eat the bread of ſorrows. So he will give his beloved quiet ſleep*, *Pſal.* 127. 1, 2.

that

that is, in their resting upon him, building, keeping, giving them bread without sorrows. Therefore, when men say, They hope for this or that, from such a creature; either they mean, They hope to receive it from God, by such a creature, or it notes, not a divine, but a meer humane hope; or it is, not a Christian, but a vain hope. 2. As God onely is able, so he is alwayes ready to do good to all those that hope in him. For he is infinite, as well in goodnesse, as in power. *Thou art good and doest good, Psal.* 119. 68. This *David* largely shewes by sundry instances, in two cases. 1. In deliverances, whereof he notes four examples, in *Psal.* 107. 1. Of men wandering in the Wildernesse, ver. 2. to 10. 2. Of Prisoners, ver. 10. to 17. 3. Of persons dangerously sick, ver. 17. to 23. 4. Of men in great danger, by Storms, at Sea, ver. 23. to 33. In all which, he saith, God helps men crying to him, when all help and hope in the creature fails them. 2. In various changes of mens outward conditions; in reference, both

both to the increaſe of the fruits of the earth, or to the diminiſhing of them, whereby men become rich, or poor, ver. 33. to 36. and to mens preferment, or abaſement, ver. 40, 41. The ſumme of all is, that, which the Pſalmiſt ſaith elſewhere, in *Pſal.* 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.*

Ob. Seeing hope is of things future, and God is a preſent help; how can it be ſaid, that God is the object of our hope?

Anſw. 1. God is, not onely a preſent help; but alſo a future help, even for ever. And ſo he is the object both of our faith and hope, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. And, for the future, hope relyes upon God, though the ſoul doth injoy him, at preſent, as our God. 1. That he will continue his goodneſſe to us. *This God is our God, and he will be our guide unto death,* *Pſal.* 48. *ult.* 2. That we ſhall have a more cleer and full ſight of him, *Pſal.* 42. 11. 3. That he will ſupply all our need, *Phil.* 4. 19. and that he will multiply grace and peace unto us,

1 *Pet.*

1 Pet. 1. 21 and that, as he is the *God of all grace*, he will, *after we have suffered a while, make us perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. These future good things hope expects, and 4. at last eternal salvation. Therefore it is called, *the hope of Salvation*, 1 Thess. 5. 8. *the hope of glory*, Rom. 5. 2. and *the hope of eternal life*, Tit. 3. 7. all which are good things to come, and though difficult, yet possible to be had, by his help, and are most certain, by vertue of his promise, in Christ, which is the ground of this hope. Hence hope is called an anchor sure and stedfast, *Heb.* 6. 19.

R. 2. From Gods manner of bringing the soul and this object, himself, together, by this hope. For, 1. By effectual convincing and humbling the soul, he prepares it for this hope. He *gives them the valley of Achor for a door of hope*, *Hos.* 2. 15. 2. He doth it, by revealing his grace to a soul so prepared. To this end, 1. He openeth the eyes of their understanding, *Eph.* 1. 18. 2. Having given them a spi-

ſpiritual eye-ſight: he layes his grace and goodneſſe in Chriſt, before them, by the miniſtry of the Goſpel, *Eph.* 3. 9. 3. He particularly applyeth the ſame to them, as theirs, by the miniſtry of the Word, *Acts* 13. 26. and by the efficacy of the ſpirit, *Pſal.* 35. 3. So that now they can look upon God, in the Covenant of grace, as their God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. and upon all the good of the Covenant, as a legacy given unto them by Chriſt, in his laſt Will and Teſtament, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. Hence what they yet have not, in ſenſe, they ſee ground to hope for, *Pſal.* 130. *ult.* And this hope ſupports the heart under great affliction, upon three main propps: 1. The power of Gods grace: 1. To pardon many and great great ſins, *Rom.* 5. 20. 2. To perform all his promiſes, how difficult ſo ever it may ſeem to our ſenſe and reaſon, *Rom.* 4. 18. to 22. 3. To comfort in all tribulations, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4. 4. To help in all diſtreſſes, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9, 10. 2. Upon the freeneſſe of Gods grace and promiſe, notwithſtanding all our un-worthy-

neſſe,

neſſe, *Iſa.* 43. 25. *Mich.* 7. 18. 3. Upon the reality of Gods good purpoſes towards us, declared by ſending his Son, and his Sons comming, to bring us to God, *Luke* 19. 10. 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. and Chriſts calling us unto himſelf, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. and the fathers drawing us unto his Son, *Joh.* 6. 44, 45. The reliſh which believers have of the ſweetneſſe of Gods grace, in Chriſt, turneth the eye of their ſoul towards him, in deſires and expectations of further good from him, *Pſal.* 34. 8.

R. 3. From the effects of this hope, all which ſhew that the ſoul is ſupported by it. 1. It brings comfort to the ſoul. Therefore *rejoycing* is joyned with this *hope*, *Rom.* 12. 12. There is joy in hope of good to come, though it be yet abſent. Becauſe the ſoul hath a taſte of it, in the beginnings, and firſt fruits. Now joy ſtrengthens the heart anſwerably to the degree of it. *The joy of God is your ſtrength*, *Neh.* 8. 10. As when a man ſeeth the clouds begin to clear, in a time of rain, he is comforted, in hope

hope that it will be fair weather; ſo when the ſoul, under great affliction, ſeeth ſome glimpſe of the light of Gods countenance, his hope and joy reviveth, and is increaſed, as that is more cleared unto him, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 6. 2. It quieteth and ſetleth the heart in peace proportionably to the meaſure of our truſting and hoping in God; *Moſes* found it ſo, at the Red Sea. *Exod.* 14. 13. and *David*, at *Ziglag*, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. 3. It makes the heart patient in waiting on God, with ſubmiſſion to his good pleaſure, *Pſal.* 37. 7. & 34. 34. How is God *their ſtrength in the time of trouble?* By ſtrengthening their hope to wait patiently and quietly upon him, not uſing any indirect and unlawful means to eſcape or come out of trouble. The Lord *anſwered concerning this: Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill*, *Iſa.* 30. 7. 4. It cauſeth the ſoul to cleave unto God, whatever befals them in the way of obedience, *Rom.* 5. 23. *Heb.* 3. 6.

Uſe 1. For reproof of two ſorts: 1. All unregenerate perſons may be hence

hence convinced that their ſtate is wretched and miſerable, upon two grounds: 1. Becauſe they have no hope in God, *Eph.* 2. 12. A Chriſtleſſe ſtate is an hopeleſſe ſtate, and an hopeleſſe ſtate is the worſt condition. They pretend to this hope, but without ground, and an ungrounded hope is a ſelf-deluding hope. The object of their hope ſhall fail them, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. and the hope which they ſeem to have, *ſhall periſh*, and *be cut off*, *Iob* 8. 13, 14. It ſhall be *as a ſpiders web*, finely ſpun, but not firm, its but an hope of their own making, as the ſpiders web is wrought out of its own bowels; and, as the ſpider thinks it ſelf, when it is lodged in its web, ſo they think themſelves ſafe in their falſe hope; but as the ſpiders web is eaſily and ſuddenly ſwept away, ſo ſhall their hope be by Gods beeſome, *Iſa.* 14. 23. 2. Becauſe they abound in vain hopes; in themſelves, *Luke* 18. 19. in men, *Iſa.* 2. 22. in riches, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. in chariots and horſes, *Pſal.* 20. 7. in their mental and bodily abilities, *Prov.* 3. 4.

Jer.

Jer. 9. 23, 24. Such hopes argue ignorance, pride, atheism, idolatry, setting up the creature above God, *Jer.* 2. 12, 13. The effects also are pernicious. 1. Losse, *Jon.* 2. 8. *Phil.* 3. 7. 2. Disappointment, *Ier.* 8. 15. 3. To be ashamed of their hope, *Iob* 6. 20. *Isa.* 1. 29. *and* 20. 5. *and* 30. 5. 4. Great hurt, *Hos.* 12. 1. *Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth the East-wind.* The East wind, in those eastern countries, was an hot skorching wind, that blasted things, and made them wither, *Gen.* 41. 6. *Ezek.* 17. 10. As *Pharaoh* was to the people of *Israel*, so are all false objects of hope, *the staffe of a broken reed, whereon if a man leane, it will go into his hand and pierce it*, *Isa.* 36. 6. Many have found it so, on their death beds, and in Hell for ever. 2. Hence believers are to be reproved, who do not exercise this hope, but give way to discouragement, in times of affliction. For, 1. Hereby they make themselves unfit to perform duties towards God and men, in a right manner. Towards God, in prayer, and receiving

ving the word and the outward seales of the Covenant, and in thanks-giving and praysing God. Towards men, in an amiableness towards all, and in merciful helpfulness towards the afflicted. 2. They dishonour Religion, by strengthening ignorant and profane persons, in a false conceit, that Religion is but a melancholick humour. 3. They weaken themselves and others. Themselves; For, from fainting, comes discouragement, and thence, halting, and from thence an aptness to be turned out of the good way. For take away hope, and you take away all endeavor. Others also, if they be weak, will be offended; and, if they be prejudiced, will be apt to insult and to twit such, as *Eliphaz* did *Iob*, in *Iob* 4. 3. to 7. 4. They give Satan great advantages against themselves, who diligently observeth such times, when Christians are under deep despondency of spirit, when they have laid aside their helmet, to wound and weaken them more, he will then ply them with suggestions, to make them believe

lieve any thing against God, and against the Scripture, and against themselves, and to conclude desperate things, to their own hurt.

Object. This is my case; therefore I never had a right hope in God.

Answ. Thus one discouragement followes upon another, as circles in the water, whereinto a stone is cast, which should humble you for neglect of stirring up your hope unto exercise. But yet, let it not discourage you. For true hope is sometimes in a believer, as in those trees, spoken of in *Isa.* 6. 13. *whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves.* It is onely winter with you, then life is hid in the root, though no signe of it appears outwardly; that you may learn not to trust in grace received, but in Christ; depending on him to quicken and actuate his own gifts of grace in you, waiting with fervent desires and prayers for the Sun of righteousnesse to arise upon you, with healing in his wings. In the mean time, remember that Christ himself hath pronounced them blessed, who are

poor

poor in ſpirit, and mourn, are meek, and hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, and that he hath promiſed unto ſuch, that heaven is theirs, they ſhall be comforted, ſhall inherit the earth, and ſhall be ſatisfied. Let ſuch encouragements quicken your hope, and quiet your hearts, that it ſhall be with you, according to his Word, and that your hope ſo grounded, ſhall not make you aſhamed.

Uſe 2. For Inſtruction, in three particulars: 1. How to bring and keep the object and this act, God and this hope together. 2. How to try, whether you hope in God aright, or not. 3. How to exerciſe this hope, in ſundry caſes, in which you may be called to the practice of it. This inſtruction is neceſſary, at all times, and eſpecially, in theſe times, wherein we may have more neceſſitous uſe of this hope, then many do imagine. Therefore I ſhall the more ſtudiouſly inſiſt in clearing theſe particulars, ſpeaking to the firſt, at this time, with the help of Chriſt.

1. How to bring and keep the object

ject and act, God and this hope together. The holy Pen-man of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrewes*, in *Heb.* 3. 6. compares the Church of God to an houſe; ſaying, *whoſe houſe we are, if we hold faſt the confidence, and rejoycing of hope firme to the end.* As it is in the building of an houſe, ſo it muſt be in the building of this hope. In the building of an houſe, that it may be ſtrong, and kept ſtrong, three things are neceſſary: 1. That a ſtrong foundation be well laid. 2. That the houſe be ſtrongly built upon it. 3. That it be kept in due repair. So it muſt be, in this great buſineſſe, whereof we now ſpeak. 1. A ſtrong foundation of hope muſt be well laid. 2. Our hope muſt be ſtrongly built upon it. 3. We muſt be careful that our hope be continually kept in due repair. Of theſe three we ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly, and ſhall endeavour to ſhew how they are to be done. 1. For the firſt, God himſelf, as he makes himſelf and his will known unto us, by his written Word, is the onely ſuitable object, and ſtrong foundation,

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or ground-work of this hope. Therefore the Church, in my Text, saith, *I will hope in him.* For in him alone are the properties of that object, on which true hope must rely. A man can be in no condition, wherein he needs help, but there is in God power and will to supply it unto him. If comfort be wanting, he is *the God of all comfort*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. He can and will create comforts, for his people, out of nothing; yea, out of the contrary: As he caused at first, *light to shine out of darkness*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. Those troubles, temptations, and persecutions, and afflictions, which threaten destruction, become means of our salvation, by his over-ruling providence, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, *Isa.* 28. *ult.* In this object, two principles are to be looked at. 1. A principle of being. 2. A principle of knowing. 1. The principle of being, is God himself, concerning whom, five particulars must be believed, that our hope may be objectated upon him. 1. That God in whom we hope, is an eter-

eternal, independant Being or Essence, who giveth being, and order of being, and power of working unto all things. 2. That in the Being or Essence of God are three Subsistences or Persons: God, in the first Person, the Father (with the Son and Holy Spirit) decreed the salvation of the Elect, and all things tending thereunto. God, in the second Person, the Son, hath fully and exactly answered that decree, as our surety, in the work of Redemption. God, in the third Person, the Holy Spirit, effectually reveales and applies the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son unto the Elect, in time, and fits them for communion with the Father and the Son, from both whom he proceeds. 3. That Christ, the Mediator, is *Immanuel*, in whom God was reconciling the World unto himself, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. who united the two natures of God and man, in his Person, and was thereby fit to bring God and man together, having made man amiable to God, and God amiable to man, who were enemies before, by the sin

of

of man. 4. That God, in Christ, is fatherly towards believers, in all his Attributes, whereby he is described, in *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. and other Texts of Scripture, all which are in God essential; and therefore eternal, and infinite. 5. That God acteth all these his excellencies, by his fatherly providence, governing and ordering all things for the good of his people, so powerfully, that Satan and his instruments, in seeking to crosse his revealed will, shall and do fulfil his secret will, to their own confusion. This providence extends as far as the creation, all things, even the most casual, and most disordered things, sins, and the most free actings of men are ordered by it, so that God doth sometimes great things by weak means, disabling more likely means, *Eccles.* 9. 11. Sometimes without means, and sometimes crossing the course of means. And, when evil is intended, God either wholly averts it, or limits and bounds it, in regard of measure, *Psal.* 129. 3. 4. or of continuance, *Psal.* 125. 3. Hereby also he causeth

and ordereth a ceſſation of actions, that ſome ſhall not favour us, and others ſhall want wiſdom and ability to help us, from Gods with-drawing his concurrence, who hath ſufficient reaſon, as well, not to do what he doth not, as to do what he doth. The right knowledge of God in his Being, is neceſſary to the well-laying the ground-work of this hope, as conducing unto the preparatory purpoſes and uſes. 1. To ſilence all diſputes and murmurings: This made *Aaron* hold his peace, *Lev.* 10. 2, 3. And *David* not to open his mouth, *Pſal.* 39. 9. 2. To cauſe the ſoul to reſigne up a mans ſelf to the will of God, *who worketh all things according to the counſel of his will*, *Eph.* 1. 11. So it wrought in *Ely*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. in *David*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. and in the Saints, *Acts* 21. 14. 3. To quicken us to inure our ſelves to do Gods will, that we may be fit to ſuffer it. For paſſive obedience ſprings from active. Then are mens wills in right order, when, as God is the higheſt, ſo his will hath the higheſt place in our hearts; when they

they are willing to do what God commands, to suffer what God inflicts, and to be at Gods dispose, when this stayeth our hearts, in all events, that they are in covenant with him, who sits at the Stern, and hath committed all power to our Redeemer, who hath our names in his breast-plate, and on his shoulders. The second principle to be looked at in God, that our hope may be well built on him, is a principle of knowing. This principle is the written Word, whereby God makes himself and his will known unto us, without which we have no good ground or warrant to build our hope upon God. But, that his people may thus hope in him with strong encouragement, He gives us his Word, that thereby we may know his good thoughts, and purposes towards us, which is a sufficient ground of hope, it being the Word of him that cannot lie; and not onely his bare Word, but a binding Word, his promises, which are free expressions of his love, with engagement of it unto us; nor onely Promises, but his Covenant,

founded upon a full satisfaction made to his justice, by our Redeemer, as the head of the Covenant; and thereunto hath added his Oath, *Heb.* 6. 18. and Seals, both outward, *Rom.* 4. 11. and inward, *Eph.* 1. 13. and all this he hath done, that our hope might be built upon a strong foundation, that believers might be supported in all tempests, *Isa.* 54. 9. 10, 11.

2. Having such a strong foundation well laid, our next duty is, to build strongly upon it. Which that you may do, attend to these directions. 1. See that you trust and hope in God by light and strength received from himself. 1. By divine light, not by meer humane reasons. For none can so know God, in his truth, and goodness, as to trust and hope in him, but by his own light revealing himself to the soul, by his Word and Spirit; as none can see the Sun, but by its own light, *Psal.* 36. 9. 2. The divine power must accompany this light. For, neither education, nor examples of others, nor our own resolutions, can settle our hearts upon God, till

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we find an inward power and authority causing divine truths to shine into our hearts, and subduing all our reasonings and thoughts unto the obedience of faith; only that soul, which hath found the efficacy of the spirit, by the Word, in casting it down, and raising it up, and renewing it, can hope in God aright for things of God; then, and not before, a man chooseth God for his portion, and cleaveth to him, as his chief good; then, and not before, the sweetness of Gods love is let into the soul, and relished by it, which draweth the whole soul to trust and hope in him. *Psal.* 9. 10.

2. Suit the Promises to your several conditions. For whatever condition of life any believer is or can be in, he hath Promises in the Word suitable to it; whether present, or possible. 1. As present, what ever difficulties or impossibilities, as to second causes, and means appear to sense, or reason, faith lifteth up the soul above them all, to look unto the Promises and power of God, and thereby

quickneth and ſtrengthenth our hope in him, *Rom.* 4. 19, 20, 21. *Heb.* 11. 27. 2. Poſſible, The Saints have found great help to their faith and hope, by putting caſes, and anſwering their own hearts therein from Gods all-ſufficiencies. So *David, Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear none evil; for thou art with me*, *Pſal.* 23. 4. Again, *Though an Hoſt ſhould encampe againſt me, my heart ſhould not fear*, *Pſal.* 27. 3. Again, *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble; therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midſt of the Sea, though the Waters thereof roar*, *Pſal.* 46. 1, 2, 3. *Paul* excellently puts other caſes, of an higher nature than theſe, and triumphs over them all, in the unchangeableneſſe of Gods love to believers in Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39.

3. When your hope is quickened, by the Promiſes, look unto God with a ſingle eye, truſting and hoping in him alone. To truſt upon two props,

of

of which one is sound, the other rotten, is the ready way to fall. Make use of all helps, which God gives you, but hope in him alone. For hoping in God is a part of that natural worship of God, injoyned in the first Commandement, which belongs to God alone, *Mat.* 4. 10. and thus to have our eyes towards God alone is the proper effect of true conversion, *Isa.* 17. 7, 8.

4. See that the dispositions of your spirits be answerable to the relations you have to God, when he becomes your portion, and the object of your hope. He hath, 1. The relation of a faithful Creator, and the disposition in you that must suit that, is, to commit your souls to him in well-doing, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. in the want of means. 2. The relation of a father, and the disposition in you that suits thereunto, is, to cast your care upon him, believing that he careth for you, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Mat.* 6. 32. 3. The relation of an husband, the disposition that suits that, is federal faithfulnesse, *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. 2 *Cor.* 11. 2, 3. 4. The re-

lation of a guid and teacher, the disposition suitable to that is, to yield up your selves in all things to be guided by his counsel, as *Asaph* did, *Psal.* 73. 24. 5. The relations of your Judge, Law-giver, and King, *Isa.* 33. 22. The disposition which answers those relations, is obedience to Gods commands, and walking in his wayes. Else, you do not trust in him, but tempt him, *Mat.* 4. 7. You may expect God, in his wayes of mercy, when you keep in your way of obedience. Then you may, with comfort, expect what ever good those relations can yield, from the All-sufficient God, who regarding more our weaknesse then his own greatnesse, condiscendeth so low as to take upon himself such relations, for the strengthening our hope in him.

5. Often call to mind former experiences, both of your selves, and others. *Experience worketh hope*, *Rom.* 5. 4. 1. Of others, *Psal.* 22. 4. and thence infer, as *David* did, *Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that trust in thee*, *Psal.* 9. 10. 2. Of your selves, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9, 10.

10. 2 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. Christians should be ready to communicate their own experiences to others, as *David* did in *Psal.* 66. 16. Thus the Word will be as silver seven times tryed, *Ps.* 12. 6.

6. Rest not in your hoping in God, as it is an act done, or a grace exercised by you. For hoping is but the act of a creature, and the gift of hope it self is but a created gift, and to hope in any creature, is to make that creature an Idol. But to depend upon God to quicken and strengthen your hope in himself alone, who is called, *the hope of Israel*, *Jer.* 14. 6. and by his help, through the promise, to trust and hope in him the Promiser, who gives Promises, and can create performances (so that, if you close with the Promise, as good, you may close with the Promiser, as better, who both speaks what he means, and will perform what he speaks;) this is the way to build your hope strongly upon God.

3. That you may keep this hope in repair: 1. See that your hoping in God be a continued act, frequently renewed upon every new occasion, not

onely in adversity, but also in prosperity, as well in injoyments as in wants. For we have use of hoping in God for the continuance of the good we have, and for his blessing to be continued to us in it. 2. Observe what breaches are made in your hope, from day to day; whether from within, by corruptions, or from without by temptations? You will find that the main breaches are either from false principles, or from doubts of true principles, or from inadvertency, and mindlessenesse of them. Thence the soul is as sheep that are driven from mountain to hill, and have forgotten their resting place, *Jer.* 50. 6. 3. Having found out the impediments of your hoping in God, stir up your selves as *David* did, saying, return unto thy rest, O my soul, *Psal.* 116. 7. by stirring up this gift of God in you, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. To this end, 1. See that your judgment be right. 2. Beware of those things that are opposite to this hope, and cast them off, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. where every thing that bows the soul downward is compared to a weight;

weight; and loose affections, and false reasonings, are compared to a long loose garment, which easily besets the feet, and will hinder a runner in a race, if it be not laid aside, or girt up. 3. Speak to your own heart, as you would speak to another, in a like case. 4. Joyn prayer with your use of other means, *Rom.* 15. 13. 5. According to Gods order of promising, do you proceed to quicken and strengthen your faith and hope in him. 1. He promiseth that he will be your God, so let your faith look at him, in Christ, and let your hope expect that he will be so to you, for the future, and for ever, *Psal.* 48. *ult.* 2. He promiseth that he will forgive all sins unto repentant believers. Therefore renew your repentance and faith in the blood of Christ daily, and then hope in him, and pray that he will make you to hear joy and gladnesse, and restore to you the joy of his salvation, as *David* did, *Ps.* 51. 8, 12. 3. He hath promised that he will sanctifie, and heal his people. Therefore hope in him, and pray to him for it, as *David* did, in *Ps.* 138.

ult.

It. 4. He hath promiſed that he will give that inheritance in heaven unto all that are ſanctified by faith in Chriſt. Therefore wait for it in hope, *Rom.* 8. 23. 24. and let that hope comfort and ſtrengthen your hearts in all the ſufferings of this life, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17, 18. 5. He hath promiſed that he will give all things needful for this life, till we come thither, *Pſal.* 84. 11. Therefore hope in him for daily bread, and for all things you need. For as the ſame love of God moved him to ſave his elect for ever, and to provide for them in this World, till they be put into poſſeſſion of that ſalvation; ſo the ſame hope relyeth upon God, both for heaven hereafter, and for all neceſſary ſupplies, till we come thither. Thus we have endeavoured to inſtruct you, in this firſt point, how to bring the act and object, God and this hope, together, that you may hope in him, which, you ſee, is a matter of great importance, and neceſſary to be underſtood practically, that we may hope in God aright.

The ſecond Inſtruction is, to teach men

men how to try whether their hoping in God, which they pretend, is right, or not. The danger is very great, if you be deceived herein, yet many are deceived, through want of light to discern the difference between the natural affection of hope and this spiritual gift of hope in God. This divine hope, whereof we now speak, may be known by 3. Characters.

1. By the ground of it. 2. By the formal act of it. 3. By the proper effect of it.

1. By the ground of it. If it be rightly grounded, it is the right hope. The ground of this hope is faith, *Heb.* 11. 1. which hath a double object. 1. God in Christ. 2. The Word of God. That you may try and examine your hope, whether it be thus grounded or not; we shall insist somewhat more largely in this, and be more brief in the two following Characters, which will be more easily apprehended, after this is cleared.

1. Hope is rightly grounded, when it is grounded or bottomed upon faith, receiving Christ, and applying to our selves, in him, God as our God, and portion, in the Covenant of Grace.

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It is the office and work of faith, to appropriate God in Christ, to a mans self. The voice of Christ unto believers, is, *My Father is your Father, and my God your God*, Joh. 20. 17. And the voice of faith, in a believer, to Christ, is, *My Lord and my God*, ver. 28, 29. God absolutely considered, out of Christ, is an object of the greatest terrour unto sinners, *Isa.* 33. 14. But God, relatively considered, in Christ, as our God and portion, is the chiefest object of our hope, and love. Faith cleaveth unto God, as our God and portion. And, when we know that God is our portion, and thereupon hope in him, then our hoping in God is right, because it is rightly grounded. Our having God for our portion, begins at our entring into Covenant with him. For then, and not before, we have a propriety in God, and he in us, *Ezek.* 16. 8. This propriety in God is given and manifested to us, by degrees. 1. The soul is convinced of the vanity and insufficiency of all other things to be our portion, and

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so is made willing to forsake them all, that it may injoy God, as his portion. Till this be done, men *observe lying vanities, and forsake their own mercy*, *Jon.* 2. 8, 9. 2. The soul is convinced that God is the God of some, by a peculiar right, *Psal.* 4. 3. These he accounts the onely happy men in the World, *Psal.* 144. *ult.* 3. Hence arise fervent desires that God would be so to him, in particular. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour of thy people*, *Psal.* 106. 4. 4. The soul is quickened, by the Spirit of faith, to turn unto the Lord with true repentance, and to put it self upon Gods mercy in Christ, and to wait upon him for the discovery of his love to him, *Joel* 2. 13, 14. 5. God, having thus far brought the soul towards himself, doth, in his own time, manifest to us that he is our God, whence the soul actually closeth with him, by faith, in Christ, as our portion, *Hos.* 2. 13. *Psal.* 73. 25. 6. Hereupon we come to hope in him, for what ever good we need, and he hath promised, *Psal.* 147. 11. And as faith groweth

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more towards full assurance, so hope groweth more strong in spiritual security, and courage, and glorying in God, *Psal.* 48. *ult.* yea, in the darkest times, faith inables the soul, from its former taste of Gods goodnesse, to claim an interest in him still. *Doubtlesse, thou art our Father, &c. Isa.* 63. 16. with an expectation of future good from him, *Psal.* 42. 11. Yea, when experience and sense failes, by reason of our inadvertency, yet so much vertue of former sense remains, as inables the soul, even when it is *in darknesse, and seeth no light, to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay it self upon his God, Isa.* 50. 10. and to *wait upon the Lord*, even when he *hideth his face from us*, and *to look for him, Isa.* 8. 17. But, if any desire to know how they may clearly discern that their hope is grounded on faith in God, as their God and portion in Christ; I answer, you may know it by Gods influence in a believing soul, whereby this hope is quickned and strengthened. For, when God becomes any ones portion, he be-

becomes a fountain of bleſſings to that perſon, *God, our own God ſhall bleſſe us, Pſal.* 67. 6. He is *a Sun and a Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them, Pſal.* 84. 11. Eſpecially, of ſpiritual bleſſings, which the Apoſtles, in their ſalutations, comprehend in two things, grace and peace. God as our God, in Chriſt, is the God of both to his people. He is *the God of all grace*; 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. and *the God of peace*, *Heb.* 13. 20. That is, he influenceth believers with all thoſe graces, which breed peace and quietneſſe in their ſouls, ſupporting them under all burthens of temptations, troubles, wants, imperfections, till they come to enjoy perfect reſt in God himſelf, and fitting them, in the mean time, more and more, for all that good, which they want, in themſelves, and he hath prepared for them, in Chriſt. For, 1. God, as our portion, is the God of love; yea, *love it ſelf*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. and a taſt of his *love is better than wine*, *Cant.* 1. 3. ſo full of ſpirit that it will revive a drooping, ſink-

sinking, dying soul, and quicken all graces in it, and make any condition comfortable, any affliction tollerable, and strengthen it to wait for more full communion with God, in the use of the most difficult means, as *Jacobs* love to *Rachel*, inabled him to wait for her seven years, in an hard service, and they seemed to him but as a few dayes, *Gen.* 29. 20. 2. God, as our portion in Christ, is *the God of hope*, *Rom.* 15. 13. whereby, as by an Anchor, he stayeth and fixeth the soul upon himself: as a Ship at Anchor, though it may be moved, and tossed, yet it is not removed from its place and station; so, if you find that your soul cleaveth to God, in Christ, and will not be driven from him, whatever troubles, or temptations befal you; your hope in him is right. This *Asaph* found, in *Psal.* 73. *ult.* 3. God, as our God and portion, is *the God of patience*, *Rom.* 15. 5. whereby believers resigne up themselves to his dispose, humbly submitting their wils to his. If you find it so; your hope is right. *David* found it 1. *Sam.* 30. 6.

4. God,

4. God, as our portion, is *the Father of Spirits*, *Heb.* 12. 9. which he so governs, and meekens, that, though we be sensible of afflictions, he keeps our spirits from discontentment and murmuring, in a quiet frame: hereby also you may know that your hope is right. The Church found it so, in *Mich.* 7. 9. 5. God, as our portion, is *God All-sufficient*, *Gen.* 17. 1. whence he gives us contentment, in all estates, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. If you find it so, your hope is right. *Paul* found it so, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. 6. God, as our portion, is *the God of all comfort*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. who, by letting the light of his countenance into the soul, maketh it light-some. This joy strengthens the soul, *Neh.* 8. 10. against inordinate fears of wants, *Psal.* 23. 1. or of dangers, *ver.* 4. and under sense of afflictions, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3. and oppositions, *Matth.* 7. 7. and temptations, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10. and in all events, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. Not, that every believer attains to such high actings of faith and hope; yet, if it prevail to cause them to trust in him,

and

and stay themselves upon him, in the dark, it is a right hope, *Isa.* 50. 10.

2. Hope is rightly grounded, when it is bottomed upon the Word and Promises of God believed in. In the first conversion, when the soul had nothing, but the bare promise of free mercy in Christ, to look at, God did thereby cause us to trust and hope in him, *Psal.* 119. 49. without former experiences. In like manner, he worketh in believers, in dark times, when they cannot recal former experiences, and want present sense of Gods love, God quickeneth his people, by quickening their looking to the naked promise, *Psal.* 119. 50. and thereby their hope also, *Isa.* 8. 17. Hence *Jacob* became such a mighty wrastler with God, *Gen.* 32. with *Hos.* 12. 4. *God is ever mindful of his Covenant*, *Psal.* 111. 5. and *faithful in his Promises*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 24. Hope looks at the good of the Promise, and the goodnesse of the Promiser, for that part of the Promise, which is not yet performed, as

faith

faith looks at the truth of the promiser and faithfulnesse of the Promiser. Now, that hope thus grounded, is a right hope, may be proved; because, when faith in the Promises quickeneth and strengthneth hope in believers, then Gods ends are attained, for which he giveth Promises. His ends are these, and the like: 1. To make known unto his people his good thoughts and purposes concerning them; *Jer.* 29. 10. This he doth, to incourage them to hope for a good end, and to endeavour, in the use of good means, to attain it; *ver.* 11, 12. 2. To draw the Elect unto Christ, in whom all Gods Promises are Yea, and Amen; 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. 3. To shew what credit God hath in the hearts of his people; *Job.* 3. 33. 1 *Joh.* 5. 9, 10. 4. To let believers see that they are richer, in their lowest estate, than others are in their greatest worldly possessions. For they have God himself, for their portion, when others have but his gifts; *Psal.* 4. 7. They have Christ, and *unsearchable riches* in him; *Eph.* 3. 8. who became poor, *that,*

that by his poverty we might be made rich, 2 Cor. 8. 9. They have ſpiritual riches, *Rev.* 2. 9. they are *rich in faith*, *Iam.* 2. 5. whereas others have onely their *bellies filled*, *Pſal.* 17. 14. Believers have a large eſtate in Promiſes, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. which are Gods bills, and bonds, and deeds of gift, *for a great while to come*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 19. They have much in poſſeſſion, and much more in hope, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. ſo that, when we hope in his word, God attaineth his end in giving his word. Therefore hope grounded on the word, is a right hope.

2. By the formal act of hope, you may try whether it is right or not. Expectation is the formal act of hope. This expectation hath three properties: 1. It's earneſt, *Phil.* 1. 20. 2. It's patient, *Rom.* 8. 25. Patient, 1. Of Labouring. 2. Of Suffering. 3. Of Waiting. Becauſe between hoping and having, there is a want of the thing deſired and promiſed, till Gods time, for performing comes. This delay is troubleſome, *Prov.* 13. 12. Therefore we have need of patience,

Heb.

Heb. 10. 35. The Husband-man ſoweth in hope, and waits with patience for the precious fruits of the earth, *Iam.* 5. 7. which the Apoſtle there applies to believers. 3. With continuance *Iob* 14. 14. Such waiting on God gives him the glory of his independency, all-ſufficiency, immutability, goodneſſe, faithfulneſſe, and wiſdom; it hath great bleſſings annexed to it, *Prov.* 8. 34, 35. *Iſa.* 30. 18. *Iſa.* 40. 31. The contrary is a compound of many ſins, of pride, and impatience, *Pſal.* 78. 41. and and diſcontent, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. and unbeliefe, *Iſa.* 28. 16.

3. By the proper effect of this hope, you may know, it to be right; love floweth from faith and hope, 1 *Cor.* 13. *ult.* eſpecially, to God, in Chriſt, in whom we hope. Hence he *that hath this hope, purgeth himſelf, as Chriſt is pure*, 1 *Ioh.* 3. 3. and is diligent in uſing all Gods means, with avoiding the contrary, *Heb.* 10. 21. to 26. with dependance on God, and truſting in him alone, not in our abilities, 1 *Sam.* 2. 9. *Prov.* 3. 5, 6, or

graces,

graces, which gave *Peter* two fals, nor in our performances, *Pſal.* 127. 1, 2. nor in the means themſelves, *Heſt.* 4. 14, 16.

Thus you ſee what are the characters of hoping in God aright: If upon tryal, you find them to be in you, in truth; that hope will not make you aſhamed, but you ſhall have cauſe to ſay, with the Church, in *Iſa.* 25. 9. *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us, &c.*

The third Inſtruction is, How to exerciſe hope in God aright, in ſundry caſes, wherein you are called to practiſe it. Theſe caſes are of two ſorts. 1, Such as concern mens private conditions. 2. Such as concern the publike. The firſt ſort of caſes, which concern the private conditions of believers, are either for the preſent, or for the time paſt, or for the time to come. We ſhall ſhew how this hope is to be exercciſed, in theſe concernments, ſeverally, and diſtinctly, with Gods aſſiſtance.

1. For the time preſent, when be-

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lievers are under exceſſive grief, whatever is the cauſe of it; whether ſin or affliction, in your perſons, or relations. Believers, as well as others, are ſubject to many afflictions, in this life, *Pſal.* 34. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous*; and, not of ſome one kind onely, but of divers kinds. *Job* ſaith of every one, *his fleſh upon him ſhall have pain, and his ſoul within him ſhall mourn*, *Iob* 14. *ult.* Herein two things are to be cleared. 1. That it is our duty to grieve under affliction, proportionately to the cauſe. It is dedolency, ſtupidity, not to grieve for afflictions, *Jer.* 5. 3. it is therefore our duty to grieve, when God afflicteth us, but more for Gods diſpleaſure apprehended therein. 2. It is our duty to grieve more for ſin then for affliction. 3. More for ſin in our ſelves than in others. And 4. For ſin in our near relations more than in others more remote; yet it is unlawful to let grief exceed the proportion allowed by the rules of Gods Word, as all do, who have not this hope, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13. The ſpirit

of man is, by corrupt nature, *unstable, as water, Gen.* 49. 4. alwayes running forth, unleſſe (as water is bounded by the bank or veſſel, into which it is put, ſo) our ſpirits be bounded, and kept within Compaſſe, by the Spirit of God. VVould you know, when grief exceeds, or is immoderate? You may know it by the effects. 1. If it diſtempers and hurts the body. Godly ſorrow, as ſuch, hurts no man, It is healing to the ſoul, and not hurtful to the body, unleſſe, by accident, the body being before under painful diſtemper, which is apt to be increaſed by any grief. *Worldly ſorrow cauſeth death, 2 Cor.* 7. 10. VVorldly ſorrow is, not onely, that which is for worldly things, but alſo that which is for ſin, upon worldly reſpects, as the principal motives of it. And that ſorrow hurts the body, and doth no good to the ſoul, as *David* found, when guile prevailed in his ſpirit, *Pſal.* 32. 2, 3, 4. 2. If it hinders you from, or in, the performance of any duty. 1. From it. The good Thief, on the Croſſe, was in great grief;

grief; yet that did not hinder him from honouring Christ, nor from minding his own salvation, nor from rebuking his fellow, *Luke* 23. 39. to 42. Nor did Christs sorrow on the Crosse, which was far greater than that thiefs, take him off from minding the future good of his Mother, *Joh.* 19. 26. 2. In duty. It turned *Davids* praying, wherein he should have exercised repentance, out of love unto God, into roaring, out of inordinate self-love, *Psal.* 32. 3. and it hindred the *Israelites*, in hearing *Moses*, when he spake most comfortably to them, from receiving comfort thereby, *Exod.* 6. 9. It is with the soul, in this case, as it is with the body. When Physick works upon the right humour, it carries away that which distempers, without hurting the body. But, if it onely exasperates the distemper, and removes not the cause; it doth hurt. 3. If your minds are so fixed upon a particular grievance, that you cannot be duly thankful for other mercies, nor take comfort in them; like froward children, that, being

croſſed in one thing, throw away all the reſt. For this *Joab* juſtly blamed *David*, though he erred in the manner, becauſe he wept exceſſively for the death of *Abſalom*, and did not rejoyce in the victory, and give thanks to God for it, 2 *Sam.* 19. 1. to 8. 4. If it inclines the will to ſeek eaſe and comfort, in ſome un-warrantable, and unſafe way. This is called *halting*, whereby men are *turned out of the way*, *Heb.* 12. 12, 13. 5. If the ſoul ſinks, and faints under it, is wholly ſubdued by it, ſo as it cannot bear up it ſelf. This is one of the extreams which wiſdom forbids all her children to fall into, and which to forget is a ſin, *Heb.* 12. 5.

Now the exerciſe of a right hoping in God, is of neceſſary uſe, in this caſe, to moderate ſorrow, and to keep it within due bounds. This it doth, eſpecially two wayes. 1. By ſtriking at the root, and weakning the cauſes of it. 1. If it be for outward loſſes and croſſes, hoping in God raiſeth up the ſoul by looking up to God, and ſeeing that they are, either from him, as

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our God in Covenant. Thus it raised up *Iob*, *Iob* 1. 21. and *David*, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. or that they are for God, and for their witnesse-bearing to his truth. This inabled the Saints of old, to *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better, and an enduring substance*, *Heb.* 10. 34. 2. If it be from losse of dear relations, and Gods displeasure apprehended therein; this hope will quicken in you godly sorrow, and endeavours to seek reconciliation and peace with God, by repentance and faith in Christ, *Hos.* 6. 1. 2. It will purge out inordinate affections to the creatures, 1 *Ioh.* 3. 3. over-grieving for the losse of creature-comforts ariseth from over-joying in creature-contentments. 3. If it be from bodily weaknesse, or sicknesse, or pain, or any distemper, that renders a man unserviceable in his place; this hope, being rightly exercised, will moderate that sorrow. 1. By bringing a spiritual light into the soul, to prepare it to receive comfort. For the body is compared to an house, and to

a garment. Hence they can argue, *à pari*, the more worn and tattered the garment is, the ſooner we ſhall have a new one. So it is with the ſoul 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43, 44. And the more crazy and weak the houſe, or rather, the priſon is, the nearer the priſoner is to be delivered from it. So it is with the ſoul impriſoned in this earthly houſe of the body, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, *&c.* 2. By quickning us unto thoſe duties which ſuch a condition cals for, *viz.* Patience, paſſive obedience, quietneſſe, contentedneſſe, prayer, *&c.* *Pſal.* 39. 9, 10. 4. If it be from ſin, in our ſelves, or others, or in our families and near relations; this hope will be of neceſſary uſe to keep the ſoul from being ſwallowed up with over-much ſorrow. He that grieves for ſin, muſt grieve in hope. For a vexing, diſcouraging, deſpairing grief will do no good, but much hurt, as you may ſee, in *Ier.* 18. 12. and *Ezek.* 33. 10, 11. But that ſorrow for ſin which is accompanied with hope of mercy, quickneth to prayer of faith, *Iob* 7. 20. and to reformation, *Ezra* 10. 2, 3, 5. If

5. If it be from an apprehension that God is your enemy, and fighteth against you, as he is and doth sometimes, *Isa.* 63. 10. this hope is of necessary use; whether your apprehension be right, or wrong. If it be so indeed, it will quicken you to make all speed to be reconciled unto God, in Christ: Hereunto this hope encourageth: 1. From the mercy and grace of God in forgiving repenting sinners, *Psal.* 130. 4. 2. From his willingnesse to deal so with you, declared sundry wayes. 1. By sending his Son to make attonement for lost sinners. 2. By sending his Embassadours to beseech you to be reconciled unto him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. 3. By his never refusing Rebels, that sought his favour in Christ, upon Gospel terms. 4. By his commanding us to forgive such as repent, though they have sinned against us unto seventy times seven times; and himself will not be behind us in mercy and kindnesse. 2. But if it be not so indeed; if God be not our enemy; this hope will awe the soul from wronging God, by our mis-apprehensions.

henſions. It is an injury to a man, that is our friend, and hath approved himſelf ſo to be, by many kindneſſes, if we ſhould charge him with enmity, and ſay to him, you do not love me, you hate me, you are mine enemy, when you cannot prove it. Hoping in God will arme the ſoul againſt ſuch concluſions, by former experiences of ſundry effects of Gods favour towards you, in pardoning ſome ſins, ſubduing ſome luſts, healing ſome diſtempers, ſcattering ſome temptations, working ſome ſpiritual good in you; as, faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love to all the ſaints, granting ſome prayers. Say not, I know not, whether God hath done thus, in mercy and favour toward me, and whether he will continue them unto me, or not; for theſe are Covenant mercies; and therefore ſure mercies, even *the ſure mercies of David*, *Iſa.* 55. 3. Every anſwer of prayer, every gift of grace, that makes the more prayerful, humble, watchful, thankful, ſerviceable to God and man, that leads the ſoul to God, in Chriſt, is from his fatherly

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goodnesse and love to thee in Christ. Say not, if God were my Father, I should see his face, but he hides his face from me; For that doth not alwayes follow. Sometimes children are infants, and know not their Father; though he acts for them, as a father. Sometimes grown children see not their father, many years together, yet rest in his fatherly love and care for them. So God will have his stronger children, many times, *to walk by faith and not by light*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. Sometimes the child, being forth at School, or at Prentiship, desireth earnestly to come home and see his father, but the father sees it to be inexpedient, at that time, to grant his request. But he will send him a letter, a token, a messenger, or some friend to visit him, he shall see him, in them, not in his person. So God deals, many times, with his children, who desire to see his face, to have sensible demonstrations of his favour and love to them. They shall see him, in his letters the Scriptures, and the Promises, or in some token of his

love, ſome *ſtrength in their ſoule*, *Pſal.* 138. 3. or, in ſome *meſſenger*, *Job* 33. 23. whom he ſends to comfort them, and his ſpirit to quicken and ſtrengthen them to wait upon him.

Object. But where the Spirit is, there are the fruits of the Spirit, and, among the reſt, joy, *Gal.* 5. 22. which I want.

Anſw. 1. Take a believer, at the worſt, he hath that joy which he would not part with, in exchange, for the jocondneſſe of worldly men. 2. He hath true joy, through faith, even when he is *in heavineſſe, for a time*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. he hath it, in the root, when it doth not ſprout forth in leaves, becauſe it is winter with him. He who deſires ſpiritual joy, and grives for the want of it, hath true joy, in ſome de gree; as that man, from faith, bewailed his unbelief, *Mark* 9. 24.

The ſecond way, whereby this hope boundeth and moderateth ſorrow, is, by ſtrengthening the ſoul to ſtick to right grounds of true comfort, to main-

maintain their joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, as their portion, not yielding up their purse to every thief, nor suffering themselves to be wrangled out of their right in it. If excessive sorrow begins to seize upon the soul of a believer; this hope will 1. Quicken him to examine its commission, by parlying with his soul, and enquiring whether there be good reason, a sufficient cause for it, or not, as *David* did, in *Psal.* 42. 5. 11. and 43. 5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, &c.* For sometimes your sorrow is causeless, and groundless, and commonly it is so: 1. When it is boundless. For reason will set bounds unto grief, but mistakes, and mis-apprehensions, know no bounds. 2. When it is plea-less, being tried at the bar of right reason, or of the judgment of those who are godly-wise. *Job* in a passion, challenged God himself to dispute, and gives him his choise, whether he will oppose, or answer, he will be for him, and fill his mouth with Arguments, and doubts not that he shall carry the cause. But, when

God

God appeared, and ſpake to him, *Jobs* paſſion vaniſhed, and his courage failed, and he confeſſed that he had ſpoken fooliſhly, and would now lay his hand upon his mouth. Compare *Job* 23. 3, 4, 5. with *Chap.* 40. 4, 5. and *Ch.* 42. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. So ſometimes a dejected diſcouraged Chriſtian thinks he hath ſo much to ſay againſt his comfort, as will put to ſilence the beſt and ableſt Miniſters. But when any judicious Miniſter, or experienced Chriſtian, comes to him, he hath either nothing to ſay, or nothing of weight, but what is full of errour and miſtakes. Say therefore to your ſelves, in this caſe, as God did to *Ionah*, *Doeſt thou well to be angry?* Do I well to be thus dejected? 2. If there be cauſe for ſorrow: 1. Examine, whether it be ſufficient to juſtifie ſuch a meaſure or degree of ſorrow, or not. That ſorrow, which drives the ſoul from God, which indiſpoſeth it to prayer, thankſ-giving, to the duties of his calling, to works of mercy and love, that makes him lumpiſh, harſh, paſſionate, that ſowres

and

and distempers his spirit, is excessive and immoderate. 2. Examine from what Topicks the Arguments are fetched, that are used to justifie such a degree of sorrow. The soul of man should not be subjected to sense and feeling, or to any way of reasoning, but that which is from and according to the Word of God. To argue, that you have no faith, because you are full of doubting, that you have no grace, because you have strong corruptions, is to *offend against the generation of Gods children.*, *Psal.* 73. 15. the vanity whereof *Asaph* saw, when he went into the Sanctuary of God. So will you, if you consult the Scriptures. 3. Fly *to the God of all comfort*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. First issue that great question, Am I Gods Child, or not? If not; rest not in that state, but hasten out of it. If yea, and thou art so, if thou hast his Image; then set faith on work: 1. Upon Gods all-sufficiency, and fetch all from heaven, which thou wantest on earth. 2. Upon his Efficiency:

ciency: 1. Recal to mind what he hath done for thee in times past, as *Asaph* did, in *Psal.* 77. 5, 6. 2. For the future; rest on his bare word, and promise, which shewes what he will do. Account that to be thine, which thou hast in grant by the promise, as *David* did, *Psal.* 60. 7. *God hath spoken in his holinesse, I will rejoice, &c. Gilead is mine, &c.* Thus apply what Christ saith, in *Mat.* 5. 3, 4, 5. and the Scripture every where. 3. For the present; consider what God doth for thee. Doth he support thee, that thou sinkest not under despair? Doth he keep thee in patience, and submission to his will by hope? Doth he quicken thee to use all good means, with waiting upon him? Give him the glory of his grace, and be encouraged to spread before him, in prayer, all thy doubts, thy fears, thy temptations, and wants, *Phil.* 4. 6. and, with prayer, joyn hoping in him, and waiting on him. Say, I here is mercy in him, to pity; and power in him, to help; though I find no comfort, yet, I hope, I shall; though my prayers be

not

not yet answered; I hope they will be, in the best season, and I will wait on God, till he doth answer them. If yet comfort come not; improve the communion of Saints, and the publick Ordinances, as *David*, *I will hear (in what God the Lord will speak)*, *Psal.* 85. 8. use men and means, but let your hope be fixed upon God onely, look to him for comfort, *who creates the fruits of the lips, peace*, *Isa.* 57. 19. use the communion of the Saints, in private also; but so, as waiting for his manifesting himself to your soul, as the Church found he did, in *Cant.* 5. 8. and 6. 3. And, if thou canst not find out what particular hinders thy comfort, do as men use to do for their bodies, when the distemper is general, who make an issue, to draw the matter to some head; pitch upon some particular sin, to which thou art most subject, by natural inclination, or by thy calling, or company, or the condition of the times, and let out the corruption that may. Begin repentance there, and joyn with it faith in the blood of Christ, and so seek reconciliation

conciliation with God, and comfort thereby. In thus doing, wait on God, till he satisfie thy thirsty soul, who hath promised, that *they, who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up upon wings, as Eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint*, Isa. 40. 31.

The second case, whereon believers are called to exercise this hope, in their personal concernments, is, in reference to the time past, the seeming frustration and disappointment of their former expectations. For, having prayed and waited for the good desired, yet they have not obtained it. And many, when they have given up their names unto Christ, looked for peace, prosperity, and good dayes, but find troubles, crosses and afflictions of sundry kinds; this much disquieteth, and sometimes discourageth their spirits. Hence, they are apt to complain, with the Church, in *Jer.* 8. 15. *We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble*; and, to conclude, as they did,

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in *Isa.* 49. 14. *Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* In this case, that may be made for a right exercise of hoping in God, I shall distinguish the subjects of it. 1. There are some, whom God forsakes really. 1. Such as forsake God. *If ye forsake him, he will forsake you*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. This is the condition of all Apostates, that depart from the rules of Gods worship, and the Churches of the Saints, embracing and following worldly policies and advantages. 2. Such as seem to seek God, but rest in outward performances without inward sincerity and spiritualnesse, and trust in their parts and gifts, and duties, not in Christ, for acceptance with God. This is the condition of all hypocrites, who sin and pray, and pray and sin, without true repentance, yet think to be accepted of God for the things they do in religion outwardly, of such the Lord saith, in *Hos.* 5.

Quosdam deserit, quosdam deserere videtur. Amb. in Psal. 118.

5. 6. *They shall go with their flocks and with their Heards to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him, he hath with-drawn himself from them.* 3. Such as abuse the mercies they have received, and yet presume that mercies shall be still continued and added, though they go on in their impenitency. This is the condition of all obstinate, hard-hearted sinners. These may receive their doom from that which the Lord denounced against *Israel*, in *Hos.* 1. 6. *Call her name Lo-ruhamah; for I will not adde any more to shew mercy to them.* As if he had said, They have received many mercies from me, but they abuse them all, and presume that they shall receive more mercies from me: but it shall not be so. I will not adde any more. Of all these and the like, the Apostle saith, they are *without Christ, without God, and without hope*, *Eph.* 2. 12. Therefore I have no more to say to them, in this point. 2. There are others, whom God doth not forsake, really, but onely seemingly, and that, but in some respect, and, but for

a

time. And that he is present with them graciously, when they think he hath forsaken them, appeareth by his efficacy in them. 1. That he quickens them to seek him in the use of all means, *Psal.* 9. 10. *For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* 2. That they seek him, as their portion, as their chief good, without enjoyment of whom nothing will satisfie them. This is from the efficacy of his grace in them, as it was in the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 4, 5, 6, 8, 10. 3. That Gods withdrawing from them, in any degree, makes them fearful of his forsaking them utterly: and, for prevention thereof, careful to engage themselves to obey him more perfectly. Thus it wrought in *David*, *Psal.* 119. 8. *I will keep thy Statutes, O forsake me not utterly!* These are the persons, who are called to exercise hope in God, in this case. To instruct them how to perform this great duty aright, I shall propound five Directions.

1. *Direction.* Make it clear unto your own souls, that you have a good ground

ground of hope. See that your faith in God is right. For this hope is the daughter of faith. And, if you are in the dark, as to present sight of your good estate; consider whether formerly, when you had a clear light, you then knew that your soul said, *the Lord is my portion.* For it may be, at some times, with a true believer, spiritually, as it was with *Eutychus*, who did, in *Act.* 20. 10. that, though life is in him, yet he hath not the sense of it. Then, though Gods face is towards him, yet he complains that he hath long hid his face from him, as *David* did, in *Psal.* 13. 1. and, if his Ministers speak comfortably to him; it is with him as it was with the people of *Israel*, when *Moses* spake as comfortably unto them as at any time, but they hearkened not unto *Moses* for anguish of heart, *Exod.* 6. 9. and, when *he remembers God, he is troubled, and complaineth, and his spirit is over-whelmed*, as *Asaph* found, in *Psal.* 77. 3. In this case, faith it self must be helped, by reflecting upon former

experience. This course *Asaph* took and found relief by it, *ibid. ver.* 5, 6. So a believer having called to mind former passages between God and his soul, when he made diligent search, and upon tryal of his estate toward God, by Scripture light, found it to be good, hath good ground to hope in God, that it is so still, and that it will so continue for ever, and that from the sure Word of God in the Scripture, which assures us that Gods drawing us to himself, in Christ, is from his *everlasting love*, *Jer.* 31. 3. and that Christ, *having loved his own, which are in the World, loveth them unto the end*, *Joh.* 13. 1. and that *the gifts and callings of God are without repentance*, *Rom.* 11. 29. As a man, who hath deliberately cast up his accounts, and summed up the particulars exactly, when he took a fit season for it; if afterward, when being sick, or in some hurry of businesse, he is not fit to review the particulars, he be demanded how the Accounts stand, he will refer himself to the foot of his Account, in a certain per-

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ſwaſion that it is right; ſo a believer being under temptations and ſeeming deſertion, may, and ſhould exercise this hoping in God, and hath good ground ſo to do, from what he formerly found, when he diligently ſearched into particulars, though now he cannot call them to mind. Or, as a woman with child, having felt it ſtir in her womb, knowes thereby that ſhe hath been quickened, and conceived, and hath thereby comforting hope that it will go on, though ſhe doth not alwayes feel it ſtir: So it is, in this caſe, and much rather, For that conception may die, and the woman may miſcarry; but ſo cannot the regenerate, *being born again not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23.

2. *Direction.* When thus the ground of hope is cleared to be good, and way is made for the excerciſe of it; then let it be exerciſed, in its purging work. This is the firſt uſe, wherein hope is to be improved, in this caſe.

For,

For, *every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure*, 1 *Joh.* 3.3. Else, that which now hindreth your comfort and peace, will hinder them, till it be taken away. Sin is the great impediment of all our good. This therefore must be the first work of this hope, the purging away of sin. Therefore the Church in my Text, took that course: Saying, *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again to the Lord*, *ver.* 40. Do ye the like, in a like case, and, that you may do so, follow these Directions. 1. Pray the Lord to shew wherefore he contendeth with you, *Iob* 10. 2. with purpose of heart to forsake whatever sin provoketh him to anger. This was *Elihu's* counsel to *Iob*. Surely, saith he, *It is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Iob* 34.31,32. Pray him also, to shew you what he would have you to do, as *David* prayed, in *Psal.*86.11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in*

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thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name! Pray him, that as he ſends afflictions, ſo he would ſupply grace, that you may profit by them. For *I am the Lord our God, the Holy one of Iſrael, our Redeemer, that teacheth us to profit. Iſa.* 48. 17. Repenting *Ephraim* found the benefit of this courſe. God took notice of their bemoaning themſelves, with confeſſion of their former unſubduedneſſe to Gods will and yoak, and of their prayer, *Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned, thou art the Lord my God, Jer.* 31. 18. What benefit had *Ephraim* hereby? They tell that, in *ver.* 19. *Surely after I was turned, I repented, and after that I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh, &c.* 2. Having thus done, ſearch the Scripture, and your own hearts, to find out the particular ſin, or ſins, which have brought this affliction upon you, or which do hinder the exerciſing of your hope. 1. To find out the particular ſin or ſins, which have brought the affliction upon you; conſider, 1. For what ſins God hath threatned, in his Word,

or

or inflicted upon others, such judgments as are upon you, *Ezek.* 12. 25. *Jer.* 26. 4, 5, 6. *Zeph.* 3. 6, 7. 2. How you have abused those things wherein or whereby God afflicteth you. *Eli* and *David* were too indulgent to their children, and were punished in them and by them. *Israel* abused the corn and wine, the wool and flax, the silver and gold that God had given them. Therefore God took them away, *Hos.* 2. 8, 9. God caused the land to keep the Sabbaths, while the Jews were in Captivity, for their not sanctifying the Sabbaths, in their own land. And for their lightly esteeming the Word preached unto them, the Lord brought a famine of the Word upon them, *Amos* 8. 11. There is now much sickness and mortality among us, did you not mis-spend your time, and strength, in the dayes of your health? sundry are restrained from the publick Ordinances; Is it not, because they have disregarded them, or been unfruitful and unprofitable under them? 3. Search, if you have not been faulty towards others, in

the things you now suffer your selves. *They that spoiled, and dealt treacherously with others, shall be spoiled and dealt treacherously with themselves*, Isa. 33. 1. *He that leadeth into Captivity, shall go into Captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword*, Rev. 13. 10. *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*, Jam. 2. 13. Do others wrong you in your names, in your estates, in any of their dealings with you? Consider, how you have wronged others. Are others helplesse and hard-hearted towards you, in your afflictions? If upon search you find, that you have been so to others, give God the glory of his righteousnesse, saying, with *Adonibezek*, *as I have done, so hath God requited me*, Judg. 1. 7. 4. If you have not profited by afflictions formerly upon you; you may justly suspect that he renewes, and, it may be, increaseth your afflictions, for that cause. For so the Lord threatned his people of old, *If ye will not for all this* (viz. former lesser punishments

ments inflicted on you) *hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins*, *Lev.* 26. 18. and the same he repeats again and again, four or five times, in that Chapter. And he did accordingly, when the people of *Israel turned not unto him that smote them*, the Prophet told them, *for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still*, *Isa.* 9. 12. and it is thrice repeated, in that Chapter. So hath the Lord dealt with us, in this place; for sundry years past, he hath visited us with returns of sicknesses, every following year sharper than the former; because whatever purposes men and women had, and whatever promises they made, when Gods hand was upon them, all wore off and came to nothing, after he had released them: So that we, in this wilderness, may be justly charged for dealing with God, as the people of *Israel* did in the wilderness, and have cause to expect, as they found from the Most High, *Psal.* 78. 32. to 38. In this case, God dealeth with his people, as Physitians

are wont to do with their patients, upon whom when they find that the physick formerly given doth not work, they second it with some stronger purge; and, when they find that the disease is so setled, that quicker courses are not effectual; they prescribe a course of longer continuance. 5. Search to find out your own special corruptions; the sinnes of your nature, whereunto you are naturally, that is, by your natural constitutions, more addicted and inclined, then unto other; the sins of your callings, that is, such as whereunto, by occasion of your place and vocation, or your course of life and conversation, you may have more and more frequent occasions of, and greater and stronger inducements, and inticements to, then others, and the sins of the times and places in which you live. This course *David* took, and thereby proved that he was upright before God, *Psal.* 18. 23. 6. Call to mind of what sins you have been formerly admonished and convinced, publikely, by the Ministers of the Word, or privately, by godly friends,

friends, and others; or secretly, by the motions of Gods Spirit, and checks of your own consciences, but have not repented of them, nor turned from them. For it is Gods manner, to *open the ears of men, and to seal instructions by afflictions*, as *Elihu* told *Iob*, though he mis-applyed it to his case. *Iob* 33. 14. to 30. 2. Having found out the particular causes for which God contendeth with you; add thereunto another search, to find out those sins which hinder the exercise of this hope more directly and immediately; as, 1. Your aptnesse to have hard thoughts of God. This is very injurious and dishonourable to God, and therefore he frequently in Scripture expostulateth with and complaineth of his people for it: As you may see in *Ier.* 2. 31. *Ezek.* 33. 10, 11. *Mich.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *David* found out this evil, in himself, and repented of it; as you may see, in *Psal.* 31. 22. and 116. 11, 12. 2. Your aptnesse to be short spirited with God, which is contrary to the waiting of hope. This greatly incensed the wrath of God against his people of old, of

whom it is ſaid, in *Pſal.* 78. 40, 41. *How often did they provoke him, in the Wilderneſſe, and grieve him in the Deſart? yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Iſrael.* So do all they, whoſe hoping in God ceaſeth, if he do not grant them the particular thing which they expect, and in their time, and by their means. 3. Your unwarranted expectations of good, without mixture of any evil; of peace, without trouble; of health, without ſickneſſe; of eaſe, without pain; of joy, without ſorrow; of proſperous ſucceſſes, without croſſes; which God hath no where promiſed; but hath fore-told the contrary every where in his Word; that he *will viſit our tranſgreſſion with the rod, and our iniquities with ſtripes*, *Pſal.* 89. 32. and *that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*, *Acts* 14. 22. and that *whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth*, *Heb.* 12. 6. And the reaſon why Chriſt fore-told theſe things, is, *that*, when they come

come to passe, *we might not be offended*, as himself saith, in *Ioh.* 16. 1. and, that, *when the time shall come, we may remember that he told us of them*, as he saith, in *ver.* 4. 4. Your aptnesse to be slight spirited and careless in retaining the favour of God, and in maintaining the workings of his Spirit in you. The former, the Church found in themselves and confessed, in *Isa.* 64. 7. *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.* For the later, the Lord reproveth the Church of *Ephesus*, though he took notice of many good things in them, and done by them: Nevertheless, he tels them, that he hath this against them, *that they had left their first love*, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 4. and commands them, *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works: Else I will come unto thee quickly, &c. ver.* 5. 5. Be humbled for, and repent of your frustrating of Gods expectations, as the great provocation of God to disappoint your expectations.

Consider, to this end, what God hath done for us, and therefore doth expect from us, in that which the Lord said concerning the house of *Israel*, in *Isa.* 5. 4, 5. and let us fear lest our unfruitfulnesse, unprofitablenesse, and un-answerablenesse to the means and mercies received incense his wrath and jealousie against us more then against others, for whom he hath not done so much, as he hath done for us. For so he determined concerning *Israel*; *you onely have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities*, *Amos* 3. 2.

2. Having thus searched and tried your wayes; the next duty is, to *turn again to the Lord*, with unfeigned repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ, and amendment of life. This was the fruit of *Davids* considering his wayes, his turning his feet unto Gods testimonies, *Psal.* 119. 59. Else you do but, as if a wounded man should cry to the Chyrurgeon for ease of his pain, but will not endure to have the arrow head, or splinter, that sticks

sticks in his flesh, plucked out. *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, said *David*, *the Lord will not hear my prayers*, *Psal.* 66. 18. And the people of *Israel* found that, when they did evil as they could, and cast off the thing that is good, and yet prayed unto God, as their God, he would not own them, nor accept their prayers, but upbraided them with their sins; as you may see, in *Jer.* 3. 4, 5. *Hos.* 8. 2, 3. Therefore the Church in my Text took a right course to strengthen their hope in God, when they resolved upon this order, first to search and try their wayes and turn again to the Lord, and, after that, to lift up their hearts, with their hands unto God in the heavens, *Lam.* 3. 40, 41. These things being done, that your hope may act aright.

3. The third Direction, which is to be attended, that you may exercise this hope, is to use this hope aright in its second work, for encouragement, by your cherishing in your selves good thoughts of Gods good purposes towards you, and expectation of good

from God ſuitable to your needs: Hereunto the Lord encouraged the repenting Jews, in their Captivity in *Babylon*, Jer. 29. 11. to 15. Having promiſed them that, at the time appointed, he would viſit them and perform his good towards them, in cauſing them to return, he acquainted them with his good thoughts towards them, as the reaſon of it, and what he would work in them, to fit them for that mercy; ſaying, *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go, and pray unto me, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your hearts, &c.* Do not conclude concerning Gods thoughts towards you, by preſent ſenſe and feeling, but by his own word. Therefore *David* reſolved to *hearken to what God the Lord ſaith*, not to what carnal reaſon and ſenſe would ſay, and the reaſon of his ſo reſolving is drawn from the expectation of his hope; *for he*

he will speak peace unto his people, and to his Saints; *Psal.* 85. 8. and his expectation so grounded, was so strong, that he pleaded it with God, saying; in *Psal.* 119. 49, 50. *Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.* And well may believers be strengthened in this hope, having it built upon so firm a foundation, as the word of God concerning which *David* saith, in the same *Psal. ver.* 89, 90, *For ever O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth and it abideth.* How is the earth established? we see, if you cast the least stone upwards in the aire, it abideth not there, but soon falls down to the earth; yet the earth it self, though it is an huge, vast, heavy body, abideth in the air, wherewith it is surrounded, and wherein it hangeth. How is this done? It hath no pillars to hold it up; but the Decree and Word of that mighty God,

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who *upholdeth all things by the Word of his power*, *Heb.* 1. 3. His power accompanying his Word upholdeth the earth in the middeſt of the air, and ſhall it not ſupport our hearts, in the middeſt of all temptations? If the greatneſſe of your former ſins, of which you have now repented, diſmay you; remember what the word of the Lord ſaith, in *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will multiply to pardon.* Say not, I cannot think that God can have any good purpoſes and thoughts toward ſuch a ſinful wretch and rebel, as I have been. For, to prevent this, the Lord addeth, in *ver.* 8, 9. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your waies my waies, ſaith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my waies higher then your waies, and my thoughts then your thoughts.* If the Lord, in the time of your diſtreſſe, bring to your remembrance

ſins

ſins formerly, many years paſt, committed by you, but not repented of, look at it, as an inſtruction, which he joyneth with correction, to awaken you to repentance, as he did *Joſephs* brethren, when they were committed to priſon, *Gen.* 42. 21. But, if ſins committed before your calling, or ſince, but repented of, be ſet before you; do not think that they are unpardoned, or that the pardon is revoked, or that God doth it to upbraid you with them. God can, for holy and good ends, read over to his ſervants old bils of debt, which yet are cancelled, to humble them, and to make them more thankful, and more watchful. Thus he made *Job* poſſeſſe the ſins of his youth, *Iob* 13. 26. And if the Lord defer the full and ſatisfying manifeſtation of his favour to you, after you have repented; do not impute that diſpenſation to his not forgiving your ſins, but to his fatherly wiſdom and love, to excite you thereby to perfect your repentance unto the full mortifying of your ſins. As *David* dealt with *Abſalom*, whom, though his

his heart was towards him, and, as a token thereof, he sent for him to return to *Ierusalem*, yet he let him not see his face, for two years after his return, 2 *Sam.* 14. 14, 28. So the Lord dealt with *David*, he pardoned his sin. 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. yet with-held joy and gladnesse from him, till he had more thorowly repented, and fervently prayed that he would restore to him the joy of his salvation, *Psal.* 57.

The fourth Direction, is in reference to Gods delayes; if yet you find not the good you seek then, exercise your hope in its third work, which is, waiting upon God. Hereunto the Lord encouraged his people in Captivity, by a Vision, concerning their deliverance, which the Prophet *Habbakuk* received from God, and of which the Lord said, *The Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry*, *Hab.* 2. 3. Set down this for a concluded truth, which every true believer may

rest

reſt upon, that, *the Lord will not caſt off for ever, but, though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies, Lam.* 3. 31, 32. And, that he may do ſo, he waiteth for a fit ſeaſon. For he is a God of judgment, as *Iſaiah* ſaith, in *Iſa.* 30. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you. For Iehovah is a God of judgment. Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* The Lord waits for a time, wherein he ſhall be exalted in being gracious unto his people. That time is the time of their renewed repentance and converſion unto God, as to the Moſt High. Then God will have the higheſt place in their hearts. Pray that this may be wrought in you, and that thereby you may be fitted for the good you hope for, and wait for it, till Gods time comes. For all they are bleſſed that wait for him. They are now bleſſed in their ſtate, and they ſhall be bleſſed in their injoyments. In the mean time, *they that wait upon*

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the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles, they ſhall run, and not be weary; they ſhall walk, and not faint. *Iſa.* 40. 31.

The fifth Direction is, in reference to afflictions continuing upon you; while God delayes his beſtowing the good you wait for; exerciſe your hope in its fourth work, which is patience. Wait with patience; *For, if we hope for that we ſee not, then do we with patience wait for it,* *Rom.* 8. 25. It is Chriſts precept, *In your patience poſſeſſe your ſouls,* *Luke* 21. 19. As faith gives us the poſſeſſion of Chriſt, ſo patience gives us the poſſeſſion, firſt, of our ſelves, and, then, of all good things. *Let patience have its perfect work,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Iam.* 1. 4. This it hath two wayes: 1. When it puts forth perfect acts, whereunto it ariſeth by certain ſteps. The firſt is a ſilent ſubmiſſion, with a voluntary reſignation of our ſelves to the will of God. So *David* did, and ſaid, *I opened not my mouth, becauſe it was thy doing,* *Pſal.* 39. 9. The ſecond is, a thank-

thankful acceptation of the affliction with, as it were, a kissing of the Rod where-with our heavenly Father correcteth us. This is that, which, in a soul truly humble, is called *the accepting of the punishment of his sin, Lev.* 26. 41. unto this step *Iobs* patience ascended, who said, when he had lost all his creature-possessions, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, and blessed be the Name of the Lord, Iob* 1. 21. The third, and highest step, is, to *count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, Iam.* 1. 2. This is the highest step, for perfecting the actings of patience: Therefore he addeth to that, *Let patience have its perfect work*, to shew that then it hath it. The second way whereby patience comes to have its perfect work, is, when patience perseveres in acting. *The good ground*, saith Christ, *is the honest and good heart, that brings forth fruit with patience, Luke* 8. 15. where ὑπομονὴ, signifies both patience and perseverance. It is not sufficient to be patient in some troubles, but it must be exercised in all;

all; not at sometimes onely, but always; and then onely and not else patience hath its perfect work, and when patience hath its perfect work, then every grace hath its perfect work.

The third case, wherein we are to be instructed, how to exercise this hope aright, in our private and personal concernments, is, in reference to the times future. When fears of evils to come disquiet mens minds and hearts, many secret mis-givings of heart are incident even to true believers, by reason of the flesh remaining in them, in part, that sundry outward afflictions, by crosses, or losses of dearest relations, or of the means of outward subsistence, or of liberty, or of life, may befal them: or inward temptations and sins may prevail against them; which fears do usually dis-sweeten to them present mercies, and accordingly hinder their thankfulnesse to God for them. Therefore the instruction is of great importance, and of continual use, which we are now upon. For the more distinct handling

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whereof I ſhall endeavour to clear two things. 1. Something concerning ſuch fears. 2. How this hope is to be exerciſed about them.

1. For the firſt. Fear is an affliction acted and exerciſed upon the apprehenſion of ſome impendent and approaching evil. This fear is, ſometimes culpable, ſometimes commendable. 1. Fear is culpable, and a ſin, when it is oppoſite to truſting in God, of this *Salomon* ſaith; *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare; but who ſo truſteth in the Lord ſhall be ſet on high, Prov.* 29. 5. He ſhall be ſet above the reach of ſnares, and ſo be ſafe. This fear may be known by three characters. 1. By its riſe, when it ariſeth from diſtruſt in Gods promiſes and providence. This is an habitual, ruling, diſtemper in all natural men; it is not ſo in the regenerate; yet, by the ſtrength of temptation, and the fleſh, in them, it ſometimes prevailes actually. Hence *David* diſcovered a ſuddain perturbation of his mind, by unadviſed ſpeeches, which were diſhonourable to God, when he ſaid, *I ſhall periſh*

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one day by the hand of Saul, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. and, *I said in my haſt all men are liars*, *Pſal.* 116. 11. 2. By its immediate object; whether, it be ſin or trouble. 1. Fear leaſt they ſhould hereafter fall into ſuch or ſuch a ſin, fixeth their thoughts upon ſin, and inſnares them in ſin. It is very dangerous to propound to a mans ſelf any thought of ſin, as ſin, eſpecially, of the materials of ſin. For ſuch is mans weakneſſe, and Satans ſubtilty, that the contemplation of ſin in the thoughts, though it be not done with any intent to commit it, but to avoid it, defiles the ſoul, before men are aware. For ſin is a defiler, and leaves a ſtain behind it, whereby thoughts of ſin ſoon become ſinful thoughts, and the ſpeculation of ſin fals into ſpeculative acting ſin. Hereof the Apoſtle *Iames* warneth us, in *Iam.* 1. 14. Saying, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn aſide of his own luſt, and enticed. Then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin, &c.* 2. Fear of future troubles and ſufferings, ariſing from fore-thinking them, becomes blame-worthy,

three

three wayes. 1. When they imagine such as are never likely to befal them, and are disquieted with fears of them. This is to fear shadowes; which argueth weaknesse in the judgment, or guilt in the conscience. That may be said to such truly, which *Zebul* spake to *Gaal* skoffingly; *Thou seest the shadows of the mountains, as if they were men*, *Judg.* 9. 36. It is threatned for a punishment upon sinners, in *Lev.* 26. 36. and executed upon them, in *Prov.* 28. 1. 2. When they think of future evils, which are but possible, and, at the most, but probable, with such terror, as if they were certain and inevitable; and so give certain strength to an uncertain crosse. This God reproveth, in *Isa.* 57. 11. 3. When they multiply and magnifie evils, that are to be expected as certainly future, above their due proportion, and so fear lesser evils, as if they were the greatest evils. Christ warned his Disciples of this, in *Mat.* 10. 28. The third Character of such fears, is the evil effects of them. 1. *Bondage*, which is contrary to faith,

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Rom. 8. 15. 2. *Torment*, which is contrary to love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. 3. *Disencouragement*, from using good means for the prevention of the thing feared. Hence the distrustful Jews rejected the Prophets exhortation to conversion; saying, *if our transgression, and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them; how should we then live, Ezek.* 33. 10. 4. Venturing upon the use of unwarranted means to avoid the thing feared; whereby they bring it upon themselves. Thus *Saul*, fearing that, if *David* lived, his posterity should not succeed him in the throne, sought to kill him; and the *Sanhedrim* fearing that, if Christ were let alone, all men would believe in him, and the *Romans* would come, and take away both their place and Nation; concluded, that Christ must be put to death. Both brought upon themselves that which they feared, by the wrath of God against them, for using ill means to avoid it. According to Gods threatning denounced against all such, in *Prov.* 10. 24. *The fear of the wicked shall come upon him.*

2. Fear

2. Fear is commendable, until good, and our duty, when it hath hope in God's mercy joyned inseperably with it: Of this fear David saith; *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy*, Psal. xxxiii. 18. Again; *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him; in those that hope in his mercy*, Psal. cxlvii. 11. This filial or reverential fear of God may be known by three Characters. 1. By the rise of it; it ariseth from faith. *By faith Noah moved with fear prepared an ark*, Heb. xi. 7. 2. By the direct and immediate object of it, which is God himself. This was so eminent in *Isaack*, that God hath a denomination from *Isaacks* fear of him, he is called *the fear of Isaack*, Gen. xxxi. 53. When others fear men, fear poverty, fear disgrace, a believer feareth God, the Majesty, Authority, power of the great God is strong upon his heart. This makes him careful to worship God, according to his revealed will, and to walk uprightly before God, to honour, serve, and

please

please him in his whole conversation, and to seek the face of God in Jesus Christ. 3. By its effects, which are such as these: 1. It keeps from carnal security, and placing our rest and contentment in worldly things. Thus it wrought in *Job*, whilest he lived in outward prosperity. Therefore he said, in his affliction; *the thing that I greatly feared is come unto me.. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet*, Job. 3. 25, 26. and from trusting in spiritual priviledges and graces received; whereof *Paul* warneth all Gentile-Christians, saying; *be not high minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. 2. It makes men carefull to avoid what might provoke God against them, and bring on them the evil feared. Hence they fear and avoid sin, as a deadly snare. *The fear of the Lord, is a well-spring of life, to depart from the snares of death*, Prov. 14. 27. 2. Hardnesse of heart, as a mischievous evil, *Prov.* 28. 14. *Blessed is the man that feareth always, but he that hardneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.* 3. Departing from God.

God, ſo ſaith God, *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me, Jer.* 32.40. 3. This fear quickens to uſe all good means to ſenſe our ſelves againſt future evils; as fear of an inundation cauſeth men to raiſe banks, for keeping out the Sea, and, if a breach be made, to repair it ſpeedily. Thus this fear wrought in *Jacob*, when *Eſau* came out againſt him; and in *Noah*, to provide againſt the deluge; and in thoſe *Ægyptians*, to keep themſelves and their cattle in their houſes, to eſcape the ſtorm, which *Moſes* fore-told would kill all that were in the field. The more we are prepared, by this fear, for afflictions, before they come, the leſſe we ſhall be oppreſſed with them, when they come. For thereby, either afflictions ſhall be weakned, and leſſe able to hurt us, or we ſhall be ſtrengthened, and more able to bear them. Now, this hope, whereof we ſpeak, being rightly exerciſed, will be of great efficacy, to quicken good fear, and to ſubdue ſinful fear in us. Therefore, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you how you may exerciſe this hope aright, in four Directions. I 1. Lay

1. Lay a ſure ground-work for this hope to be built upon. This is then done, when you know that your ſoul ſaith, the Lord is your portion. For, 1. This will aſſure your intereſt in God himſelf, who is an all-ſufficient portion. When you can ſay, with *David*, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my Cup*, *Pſal.* 16. 5. you may comfortably adde, as he did, in *ver.* 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* 2. This will cauſe you *to cleave to the Lord with purpoſe of heart*, as *Barnabas* exhorted the *Antiochians* to do, in *Acts* 11. 23. *For where a mans treaſure is, there will his heart be alſo*, *Mat.* 6. 21. As the needle in the Compaſſe, being touched with the Load-ſtone, is in continual motion, till it points to the North; the reaſon whereof, ſome conceive, is, becauſe in the North are Rocks of Load-ſtone, with which the needle ſo touched hath a ſympathy: ſo the ſoul being touched by the ſpirit of faith, is in continual motion, till it points unto God in

Chriſt,

Christ, that living Rock and true Load-stone, who draws believers to him by a spiritual sympathy which they have with him; as he said in *Joh.* 12. 32. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* Then, and not before, they have true rest. Then they may say with *David*; *Return unto thy rest, O my soul! Psal.* 116. 7. 3. This will settle and strengthen your hearts against all distracting, discouraging, distrustful fears about future evils. For, *things to come are yours*, when *you are Christs*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. The worst that can befall you, shall not loose that blessed union that is between God in Christ and your souls. Not sin past, for that is already pardoned; and therefore shall not condemn you hereafter, *Rom.* 8. 1. nor shall sin to come, *have dominion over you*, *Rom.* 6. 14. For you *are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. Nor death, though it may separate two neer friends, the soul and body; yet it shall joyn together more fully and perfectly two better friends,

Christ and the ſoul, which, when it is abſent from the body, is preſent with the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8. and, in the Reſurrection, when both ſhall be reunited, *we ſhall be for ever with the Lord*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. Nor temptations; See how *Paul* triumphed over all principalities and powers, over life and death, over things preſent and to come, in aſſurance that nothing ſhould ſeparate him, or any true believer, from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. yea, *that all things ſhould work for his & their good*, *Rom.* 8. 28. A believer in Chriſt is as ſure of the time to come, as he is of the time preſent or paſt. For he can ſay, with the Church, in *Pſ.* 48. *ult. This God is our God, and he will be our guid unto death*; and can look unto Chriſt, as *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*, *Rev.* 1. 8. and he hath the promiſes of God in Chriſt for the future, *Iſa.* 46. 3, 4. *Joh.* 10. 27, 28, 29.

2. This ground work being well laid, build upon it, for the future, by exerciſing this hope, 1. In its purging work,

work, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. to purge out inordinate affection, whereby the soul cleaves close and fast to present things and creatures, whence, they are as afraid to part with them, as one is to have a piece of linnen cloth or plaister plucked off from an ulcerous sore, whereunto it sticketh so fast, that it can hardly be pulled away without great pain, and without drawing the skin and part of the flesh with it; whereas if that ulcerous matter were purged, and the sore healed, the plaister would fall off it self, and the cloth might be taken away, without any pain or difficulty. Hoping in God, being rightly exercised, worketh this great cure, by rectifying mens apprehensions concerning the creatures, and ordering their affections aright towards God, looking at both with the eye of faith, by Scripture light, which represents all things, out of God in Christ, when they become the objects of our hope, as vain, and sinful and hurtful. The creatures are good, as they come out of Gods hand, but as they are abused, by being idolized,

they become vain, and degenerate into nothing. For as *an idol is nothing in the world*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 4. nothing, which men account it to be, not to be truſted in. So, creatures are but vain and empty, like thoſe blaſted eares of corn, in *Pharaohs* dream, unleſſe God fils them with his bleſſing. It is a common errour and deluſion, to think that, if you had ſuch friends, ſuch relations, ſuch eſtates, &c. you ſhould live happily and comfortably. For, as *David* ſaid of an horſe, in reference to getting the victory, *an horſe is a vain thing*: So we may ſay of all creatures being ſeparated from God, in reference to happineſſe and comfort, they are vain things to be truſted in, for which Chriſt called that rich man a fool, *Luke* 12. 19, 20. 2. It is a ſin againſt the firſt Commandement, to give the honour which is due to God alone, unto any creature, as men do that glory in them, *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. and *ſet their hearts upon them*, *Pſal.* 62. 10, 11. This *is idolatry*, *Col.* 3. 5. It is Atheiſme, a denial of Gods all-ſufficiency, which is

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his peculiar glory, and the foundation of upright walking in the Saints, *Gen.* 17. 1. Is the cause of all sins. The Schoolmen do rightly define sin to be an aversion of the soul from the immutable God and turning of it to the mutable creature. For all sin implies an over-valuing of the creatures, and an under-valuing of God. See with what indignation God reproves this sin, in *Jer.* 2. 13, 18. 3. Thus to cleave unto present things, and creatures is very hurtful to your selves. For, 1. It steals mens hearts from God (as *Absalom* stole the hearts of the people from *David*) *unto things that cannot profit, nor deliver, for they are vain*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 25. 2. It provoketh God to with-draw and with-hold his concourse and blessing from the creatures, without which you cannot have any good from them, nor by them; your own experience may convince you of this. For hence it is that the creatures work unequally, not alwayes one way; friends and other things, sometimes comfort us, sometimes afflict us. Physick could not

cure *Asa*, because he trusted in the Physitians more than in God; that all may see, creatures cannot of themselves do us any good, but as God worketh by them, and with them, whose peculiar glory it is to *do good or evil*, *Isa.* 41. 23. 3. It provokes God to hide his face from you; and then, though your mountain stand, you will not have peace, as *David* found, in *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. Yea, to fill you with terrours in the middest of your jollities, as he did *Belshazzar*, in *Dan.* 5. yea, to reject your prayers, in the day of your distresse, and to send you to your Idols for help, as he did those, in *Judg.* 10. 13, 14. *For they that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercies*, *Jon.* 2. 8.

3. The third direction is, to exercise this hope in its quickening work. For this hope *is a lively hope*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. it, being quickened by the *life-making spirit*, hath lively operations and efficacy, in the souls of believers to quicken true child-like *fear of God* in them, which is *the beginning of wisdom*, *Prov.* 1. 7. for, though knowledge

ledge and faith go before it; yet there is no true wisdom in either of them, unlesse they work in a man this fear. This fear will make us stand in aw of God, when we see the effects of his wrath upon others. So it wrought in *David*, when he saw *Uzzah* smitten dead, in 2 *Sam.* 7. 6, 9. and when he saw that God did put away the wicked as drosse, *Psal.* 119. 12. and in all that heard of the dreadful stroke of Gods vengeance upon *Ananiah* and *Saphira*, in *Acts* 5. 5. 10, 11. *To will make men tremble at his word*, *Isa.* 66. 2. at the commands of the word; lest they should disobey them; at the threatnings of the word; lest they should fall under them; 2 *Kings* 22. 19. at the promises of the word; lest they should fall short of them, *Heb.* 4. 1. This fear breeds care, and quickens to self-humbling, *putting his mouth in the dust, if there may be hope*, *Lam.* 3. 29. and to speedy reformation; as we see in that speech of *Shecaniah* unto *Ezra*, *Ezra.* 10. 2, 3. and to fervent prayer, as we see it wrought in *Jacob*, *Hos.* 12. 4. with

Gen. 32. and *Hezekiah*, *Jer.* 26, 19. and the King and people of *Nineveh*, *Jon.* 3. 5. and the Prophet *Habbakuk*, *Hab.* 3. 16. It quickens believers to seek accesse unto God by the Mediator, *Deut.* 5. 27, 28. 29. and therefore to flie unto Christ, as chickens get under the wings of the hen, in affrightments, and to trust in God, through Christ, and in his word. So it wrought in *David*, *Psal.* 56. 3. Lastly, it quickens us to *fear the Lord and his goodnesse*, *Hos.* 3. 5. it will not suffer men to be wanton upon the goodnesse of God, to slight his goodnesse, to do evil, because God is good; or to sin, that grace may abound: but it will cause them to fear the Lord and his goodnesse, fear to offend his goodnesse. The goodnesse of God will strongly ingage their hearts to walk closely and uprightly with God.

4. The fourth Direction is, to exercise this hope in its encouraging and strengthening work, to establish and settle our hearts against all discouraging distrustful fears: 1. Of evil ti-

tidings; *Psal.* 112. 1, 7. 2. Of evil times; when all things are turned upside down; and the mountains, Princes and great Potentates, render themselves terrible to the Church and people of God, and the prophane multitude rage against them, like the roaring of the waters, and they can have no rest in their dwellings; yet they the Church and people of God shall have sweet refreshments, by the Promises and Ordinances, as they of *Jerusalem* had by the waters of *Siloah*, and safety, by the protection of God, who is their refuge, and a present help in times of trouble; as it is excellently expressed, in *Psal.* 46. 3. Of the prosperity and opposition of evil men, against which *David* comforted himself by hoping in God, *Psal.* 49. 5. 16. and, upon his experience encouraged all believers to take the same course; *Psal.* 27. 1, 2, 3, 13, 14. 4. Of whatever may or can befal them, in this World, *Psal.* 91. 1, *&c.* For, 1. God is graciously present with them, *Rom.* 8. 31. Therefore they may be confident of safety against future

ture evil, as *David* was, *Psal.* 23. 4. Though armies should surround them, as the *Syrians* did *Elisha*, they have no cause of discouraging fears; for, if the Lord open the eyes of their faith, they may see an invisible guard of Angels about them, as *Elisha*'s servant saw about his Master, 2 *Kings* 6. 15. 2. They are dear to God, as the *apple of his eye*, *Zach.* 2. 8. 3. All future events are in Gods, not their enemies, not in their own hands, *Psal.* 31. 15. 4. They have the sure word and promises of God, for them, *Isa.* 41. 10, 11, 12. and 43. 1, 2. 5. God is, in all the changes that passe over them, unchangeable, as in himself, *Jam.* 1. 17. so in his love to them, *Jer.* 31. 3. and in his faithfulnesse in his promises, *Psal.* 56. 4. to whom they are called to commit their souls in well doing, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. doing their own duties, and leaving events to God, as *Jacob Gen.* 43. 14. *Hest.* 4. 16. and they in *Dan.* 3. 16, 17, 18.

The second case, wherein we are to be instructed how to excercise this,

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in reference to the publick state of the Churches of Christ under persecution, and the oppression of enemies, remains to be spoken to. Which that I may the more distinctly and fully declare; I shall indeavour to clear two things: 1. What the present condition of all the Protestant Churches throughout *Europe* is. 2. How we may and ought to exercise this hope, in reference thereunto.

1. To clear the first, I shall give you a true Narrative of the Protestant Churches, in *Europe*, singly and severally considered, as I have received it from a faithful and unquestionable hand. 1. the Churches in *Poland*, *Bohemia*, *Moravia*, *Austria*, and *Silesia*, which were, not long since, many and flourishing, are now wholly dissipated and wasted. 2. Though some Churches remain in *Transilvania* and *Hungary*, yet they are in danger to be ruined by any advantage of pow-

Mr. Duries *Representation of the state of the Protestant Churches in Europe.*

power which the house of *Austria* may get against them, 3. In *Germany*, the Churches are so divided, and the Protestant States are so distracted, that, not onely all concurrences in a common way, for their mutual edification and preservation are hindred; but also, as the *Lutheran* party, by their contentious ministry, hath set it self to destroy the rest, so God hath suffered their chief Protectors, the Kings of *Sweden* and *Denmark*, to destroy each other. And the Electors of *Saxony* and *Brandenburg*, not respecting the safety of their Churches, do serve the *Austrian* design against the Protestant interest. Nor is there any considerable Prince in *Germany*, except the *Landgrave* of *Hessen*, that is able to do any thing of moment to maintain that interest. 4. In the Low Countreys, their present actings tend rather to serve the enemies design against the Protestant Interest, then for it. 5. In *France*, the Protestant Churches are deprived of their former priviledges. So that their standing is a meer toleration, at pleasure. 6. In

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Geneva, we are informed, from other hands, that the Duke of *Savoy* would impose a Governour and a Bishop upon them, or, in case, of their refusal, threatens to besiege them; and that the King of *France* refuseth to protect them, unlesse they will receive a Bishop. 7. In the vallies of *Piemont*; the Duke of *Savoy* doth still most cruelly, though not openly, oppresse and vex the Protestants, notwithstanding the peace made with them; by giving them up to the power of the Popish Inquisition, which threatens their utter ruin, if God doth not prevent it. 8. In *Switzerland*, the Pope and the *Austrians*, have stirred up and hired the Popish Cantons to break their fundamental League with the Protestants, by persecuting to death or banishment all such as leave their superstitions to become Proselytes to us. 9. How it is with our native Countrey, *England*, and those conjoyned with it, in *Scotland* and *Ireland*, you have formerly heard, in part, and may have more hereafter. 2. If we add hereunto the great

great advantages which the Popish party hath against the Protestants, and what posture the Protestant Churches are in, in respect of their mutual relation each to other, to oppose this combination of their enemies, so strongly and universally laid; it will be manifest that the Antichristian party had never so great advantage against the Churches of Christ, since the Reformation began, as now they have. For, 1. Whereas formerly the Popish parties were divided, now, their differences being composed, they are all united in one common design against the Protestant Religion and Churches; and their head, the Pope, doth manage their common interest with much subtlety and vigour, and that openly, by innumerable Agents and Emissaries, who are subordinate to *the Congregation de propaganda fide*, who creep into all Protestant States and professions, to observe any distance or divisions among them, to widen and foment the same in the minds of the common sort, and to cast stumbling blocks cunningly before

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all the reſt, and thereupon to inſinuate the more plauſibly their own ſuperſtitions. Hence, in *France*, where the popiſh Inquiſition was not formerly admitted, it is now of late introduced under a new name of *the Congregation de propaganda fide*; which is an Inquiſition in effect, and hath begun to act there with publick Authority, prohibiting all commerce from abroad, for the vent of Divinity books; in ſo much that they do not ſuffer Bibles brought from *Geneva* to be ſold any where, but do confiſcate them. And in every City in *France*, where a Church of Proteſtants is, there is alſo a certain number of Emiſſaries, belonging to *the Congregation de propaganda fide*, ſetled, to oppoſe and vex them. And it is intended that this deſigne ſhall be proſecuted univerſally against all proteſtant Churches in other places, ſo ſoon as the Proteſtant States ſhall be ſufficiently weakned, by diviſions among themſelves. 2. It is greatly to be lamented, that, whileſt Satans Inſtruments are ſo active and united to advance

vance his Kingdom; we who are subjects of Christs Kingdom, and in many wayes bound to advance it, are so careless of Christ his interest, that on the one hand, licentiousnesse, prophaneness, heresies, blasphemies, and wickednesses break forth, to the reproach of Christian Religion; and, on the other hand, the divided professors thereof seek & follow eagerly their own advantages, of power and places to undermine the settlement of each other; and while the enemies have Agents every where, and an universal correspondency to weaken us by division, & then to ruin us; no such way of Agency or correspondency is set on foot by publick Authority among us to ingage the godly-wise & peaceable to joyn with us to lay the cō non-Gospel-interest to heart, and to communicate counsel and assistance each to other, at least, to pray for one another suitably to the exigencies of things, that when help faileth on earth, it may be procured from the mighty God immediately. For which the Lord may justly dash us into pieces, one against another, as vessels unfit for his honour and service. 2. This

2. This being the present state of all the Churches of Christ in *Europe*, I proceed to instruct you to exercise this hope aright, in reference thereunto: Which that I may do, I must clear two things: 1. What disposition of spirit is necessary to qualifie the person, to make him a fit subject of this hope. 2. How they who are thus qualified must exercise it.

1. For the first; whosoever would have and exercise this hope in reference to the publick state of the afflicted Churches of Christ, they must have and exercise publick spirits in the communion of Saints, that is, they must be sanctified by faith in Christ, and joyned unto Christ visibly, as the head of his Church, in communion with the Church, which is his body, and take to heart the publick state of the Churches, and Christ his interest in them, whatever their own private condition is, and to prefer the publick concernments before and above their own private, in their judgments, affections, and indeavours. We must esteem that spiritual Society,

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and the concernments of it, as more considerable then our own. Herein God himself gives us example, who preferres his Church before and above all the World besides, as his *chief treasure*, *Exod.* 19. 5. his *jewels*, *Mal.* 3. 17. tels them that they are so *precious in his sight, and honourable and loved of him*; that he will *give men for them, and people for their life*, *Isa.* 43. 4. as he did call off *Senacherib* from *Jerusalem*, by sending *Tirrhaka* the King of *Æthiopia*, to invade his land, and so gave both *Æthiopians* and *Ægyptians* into his hand, to free his Church from him. Now, Gods judgment of persons and things should be the rule of our judgment. For we know that the judgment of God is according to truth. So did *Moses*, whose love acted so highly from his high esteem of the Church and Gods interest of honour in it, that, though God offered to make him a great Nation, if he would let him alone, that he might consume *Israel* in the Wilderness, *Exod.* 33. 10. yet he was so far from accepting

cepting it, that he prayed the Lord to forgive their sin, and, if not, to blot him out of the Book which he had written, *ver.* 32. *David* was so strongly ingaged in his affections to the Church of God, that if all his petitions were to be put into one; it should be this, that he *might dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold his beauty there*, *Psal.* 27. 4. he had *rather be one day* there, *than a thousand elsewhere*, and to *be a Doorkeeper in Gods House, than to dwel in the Tents of wickednesse*, *Psal.* 84. 9, 10. The place of the publick holy assemblies, was a Tent, a Tabernacle, an unfixed, a moveable place, yet he cals that an House, a fixed Mansion. The people dwelt in houses firmly built upon foundations; yet *David* accounted the houses of wicked men Tabernacles; he looked for no stability in the World, but onely in the Church and fellowship of those that are in Covenant. See how affectionately he speaks of Church Assemblies and Communion with them, *Psal.* 122. 8, 9. of the same mind and spirit

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rit were the Saints in the Babilonish Captivity, *Psal.* 137. 5, 6. And the same spirit works the like disposition in all the members of Christs mystical body; *whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 26. And they see good reason for their so acting in the concernments of the Churches of Christ. For, 1. They know that God hath recorded his Name there; and his Name is put upon Church members, and therefore his Name is honoured, or dishonoured, as things are well or ill with his Church. Hence it was that *Josua* was so exceedingly afflicted for the flight of the people before *Ai*, though but about thirty six were slain; *what shall I say, when Israel flies before the enemies? and the Canaanites will hear of it, &c. and what wilt thou do to thy great Name?* *Josh.* 7. 8, 9. Therefore Christ teacheth us to joyn these together immediately; *Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come*, to shew us that answerable to the well being

being of the Church, which is the Kingdome of grace, will be the honour of Gods Name, in this World. 2. They know that the welfare of all States and people, where Churches are, depends upon the welfare of the Church. For so runs the promise; *Israel shall be a blessing in the midst of the land*, *Isa.* 19. 24. Hence it was that the Saints could not be satisfied with their own private welfare, if the Church of God was in affliction and danger, or under reproach. As you may see in *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 11. in *Nehemiah*, *Neh.* 1. 3, 4. with 2. 2, *&c.* and in *Daniel*, though he was as highly preferred, as a subject could be, in the greatest Monarchy, *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Hence also, when there hath been a double affliction upon them, both publick and private; the publick hath swallowed up the private, and made it inconsiderable, in comparison. As we see in *Eli.* 1 *Sam.* 4. 18. and his daughter in law, the wife of *Phinees*, *ver.* 21, 22. Lastly, hence it was, that when they have had a double opportunity of

of doing or procuring good to the publick, and to their own privat; they have preferred the publick advantage before their own private intereſt. Thus *Terentius* a Chriſtian Commander in the Wars under the Emperor *Valens*, who was an Arrian, being willed by that Emperor, for a ſpecial ſervice done by him, to demand what he would, made his petition to the Emperor, which he preſented to him in writing; that the Chriſtians might have the liberty of a Church by themſelves, to worſhip God apart from the Arrians. The Emperor read his petition, and diſliking it, tore it, and threw it away. *Terentius* meekly gathered up the ſcattered pieces, and profeſſed to the Emperor, that, if he could not be heard in Gods cauſe, he would not make any ſuit for his own profit. How may this worthy man ſhame moſt Chriſtians, in theſe dayes, who, if their garners may be ful, their ſheep multiply, their oxen be ſtrong to labour, their ſons be as plants grown up, and their daughters poliſhed and

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set forth with ornaments, and there be no complaining in the streets; think themselves happy, and regard not what becomes of religion, and of Christs cause and interest in the Churches, take not to heart the afflictions of Gods people; if their trading increase; one good bargain will more comfort them then all the calamities of the Church can grieve them; they can hear and speak of the breaches and ruins of *Sion*, as the *Athenians* did of news, without remorse, or regard. Brethren, it is a weighty matter to read letters, and receive intelligence in them concerning the state of the Churches. You had need to lift up your hearts to God, when you are about to read your letters from our native Country, to give you wisdom and hearts duly affected, that you may receive such intelligences, as you ought. For God looks upon every man, in such cases, with a jealous eye, observing with what workings of bowels they read or speak of the concernments of his Church. You see, in *Amos* 6. 6. how his wrath was in-

censed against those who solaced themselves with their private prosperity, but *were not sick*, their hearts aked not, *for the afflictions of Joseph.* 3. They know that, if they with-draw from being helpful to the Church, God will do good to his Church without them; but he will be avenged upon them that desert or neglect his cause and people. This Argument *Mordecai* used to *Hester*, in *Hest.* 4. 13, 14. and it prevailed mightily with her to run the utmost hazard of her own person, when there might be hope of some good to the Church thereby, *ver.* 16. For the contrary, *Meroz* was cursed by the Angel of the Lord, *because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty, Judg.* 5. 23. Though men cannot help the Lord, essentially or personally, yet they may be said to help him, relatively, in his cause and people, when they own his cause and people, and appear on that side, when Satan and his instruments raise persecutions and reproaches against them: Though the Lord needs not mens help,

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in such cases; for, *when he saw that there was no man, no intercessor, his own arm brought salvation unto him*, *Isa.* 59. 16. yet it is our duty to shew on whose side we stand. For Christ will look at them as his enemies that disown his cause and people, at such times, as he saith, *He that is not with me, is against me*, *Mat.* 12. 30. Are the people and wayes of God under reproach? Christ is reproachd in them and with them, *Rom.* 15. 3. *Object.* Ah! but they are called fools and fanaticks? *Answ.* When was it otherwise? *Bernard* complained of the like, in his time; *Ipsa Religio in opprobrium venit, & timor Domini simplicitas reputatur, ne dicam, fatuitas.* That is, *Religion it self comes into reproach, and the fear of God is accounted simplicity, that I say not folly.* And, before him, *Augustine* describes the scoffs and frumps of luke-warm professors against the zeal of those

Bern. de conf. ad Eugen. lib. 4.

Augustin. de Verb. Dom.

that were *fervent in ſpirit*, *ſerving the Lord*, *Quid inſanis? aiunt nimius eſt. Nunquid alii non ſunt Chriſtiani? Iſta ſtultitia eſt*, *demens eſt*. That is, *Why art thou mad? ſay they, your zeal is too much. What! are none Chriſtians but you? That is folly, it is fanatiqueneſſe.* And, before his time, long, how were the ancient Chriſtians in the Ten Perſecutions, 300 years after Chriſt traduced reproached! *Rev.* 12. 10. Before that, in the Apoſtles dayes, *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, and the reſt, *we are fools for Chriſts ſake*, *&c*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 10. and, *if we be beſides our ſelves, it is to God*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13. *Peter* and *John* eſteemed it a grace to be diſgraced for Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 41. Chriſt well knew how croſſe to the natural affection of all men reproach and diſgrace is; therefore he, to arme his diſciples againſt it, ſhews them the happineſſe they ſhould have by ſuffering reproaches and revilings, for his ſake, and the Goſpel, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. and the woful iſſue of declining it, *Mar.* 8. 28. Chriſt added, as a motive, to incourage his

Disciples in suffering reproaches, that so *persecuted they the Prophets*, *Mat.* 5. 12. which of the Prophets escaped sharp tryals, this way? yea, *David* himself, though a King, was despised by *Michal* for his zeal in bringing home the Ark, and dancing before it, with his head uncovered, *as one of the vain persons*, said she: but *David* was so far from being discouraged thereby, that his zeal was more inflamed, and his resolution increased; *it was before the Lord*, said he, *which chose me before thy Father, &c. And I will be yet more vile then thus, and will be base, in mine own sight, &c.* 2 *Sam.* 6. 21, 22. I have spoken the more largely unto this, because the present temptation of this time, in the other afflictions of the Churches, is the reproachful titles put upon the people of God, whom prophane men call *Phanaticks*. But, if he is a fool that will be laughed out of his coat; much more is he a fool, and a mad man, that will suffer himself to be laughed out of heaven, that will hazard the losse of his soul, and sal-

vation to free himſelf from the mocks and ſcoffs of a prophane and ſinful World. If Chriſt had not, for our ſakes *endured the croſſe, deſpiſing the ſhame*, we could never have been redeemed and ſaved; *let us go forth therefore unto him, without the Camp, bearing his reproach, Heb.* 13. 13. In the ſame Epiſtle, the Chriſtian *Hebrews* are exhorted to *call to remembrance the former dayes, in which, after they were illuminated, they endured a great fight of afflictions, partly, whileſt they were made a gazing ſtock, both by reproaches, and afflictions; and partly, whileſt they became companions of them that were ſoused, Heb.* 10. 32, 33. Let us do likewiſe, and own the reproached and perſecuted people and cauſe of Chriſt in ſuffering times. With-hold not countenance, entertainment, protection, from ſuch, if they come to us, from other Countreys, as from *France* or *England*, or any other place. *Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers; for thereby ſome have entertained Angels unawares. Remember them*

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that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the body, Heb. 13. 2, 3. the Lord required this of *Moab*, saying, *Make thy shadow, as the night in the midst of the noon day*, *i. e.* provide safe and comfortable shelter and refreshment for my people, in the heat of persecution and opposition raised against them, *hide the out-casts, bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine out-casts dwell with thee Moab, be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler*, Isa. 16. 3, 4. *Object.* But so I may expose my self to be spoiled or troubled? He therefore, to remove this objection, addeth, *for the danger is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the treaders down, are consumed out of the land.* While we are attending to our duty, in owning, and harbouring Christs witnesses, God will be providing for their and our safety, by destroying those that would destroy his people. Two helps I shall propound, to arm you against those fears of reproach, or dangers,

whereby men are apt to be drawn to flinch from the cauſe and witneſſes of Chriſt, in ſuffering times. 1. Strengthen your faith. A ſight of the inviſible God, and an eye to the recompence of reward ſo quickened and ſtrengthened the faith of *Moſes*, that *he choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches, then the treaſures of Ægypt*, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. And, as faith will ſtrengthen you hereunto; ſo faith will be ſtrengthened hereby, in your prayers againſt being lead into temptation, and ſet unto ſcandalous evils, that might expoſe you to juſt reproach. Therefore *David* having put up this requeſt to God, that none that wait on God and ſeek him ſhould be aſhamed or confounded for his ſake, urgeth this, as an Argument, to ſtrengthen his faith; *Becauſe for thy ſake I have born reproach, ſhame hath covered my face*, *Pſal.* 69. 5. 6, 7. 2. Exalt God, as the higheſt object of your fear. Fear God, as he ought

ought to be feared, fear him above all. The greater fear will expel the leſſer. Therefore the Lord preſcribes this fearing him aright, as the beſt remedy againſt all carnal fears, whereby men are wont to be hindred from obeying God in thoſe duties that will expoſe men to hurt from the creature, *Iſa.* 8. 12, 13. and *Chap.* 51. 7, 8, 12, 13. So doth Chriſt, in *Mat.* 10. 28. The balking of any duty which God commandeth, is the ready way to bring upon you, by the wrath of God, that very evil, which you fear that the doing of your duty will expoſe you to, by the wrath of men. This was that Argument, which the Prophet *Jeremy* uſed, to *Zedekiah*, in *Jer.* 38. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Becauſe he, fearing leſt the *Iews*, that were fallen to the *Caldeans*, ſhould deliver him into their hand, and they ſhould mock him; by diſobeying the Commandement of God, brought upon himſelf, as a juſt puniſhment from the wrath of God, the thing which he feared.

2. The next thing to be shewn, for your instruction, is, how they that are so qualified should exercise this hope, in reference to the publick concernments of the Churches, in this their low and afflicted condition. For this purpose I shall propound two directions.

1. See that you lay a sure foundation of this hope, a firm ground-work for this hope to be built and exercised upon; faith in God as his Churches portion, is this ground-work. Therefore, let the eye of your faith, through the glasse of the word, look unto God, in this case; as *Jehoshaphat* did, in 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* Look not so much with the eye of sense downward, and round about you, as with the eye of faith upward, and into the scripture-promises. There, if the Lord open your eyes, you shall see that more are with the Church and cause, and people of God, then can be against them. This course

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David took, and was comforted, even when he was surrounded with dangers, *Psal.* 25. 15. *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord*, said he, *for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.* That your faith in God may be strengthened in this hour of temptation, in these times of the afflictions of *Joseph*; consider three things: 1. Christ his interest of propriery in the Churches of the Saints. For the Church is Christs Vineyard. *The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel*, *Isa.* 5. 7. *Salomons* Vineyard in *Baal-haman* was the choicest parcel of his lands. Christs Vineyard is the chiefest part of his inheritance in the World. *Salomon let forth his Vineyard to Keepers.* But of this Vineyard, his Church, Christ saith, *My Vineyard which is mine, is before me*, *Cant.* 8. 11, 12. Christ doth not let forth his Vineyard unto Keepers, but himself keeps it under his own eye continually. Indeed, when his Vineyard answers not his cost and pains bestowed upon it, but, *when he looketh that it should bring forth grapes*

grapes, *it brings forth wild grapes*, then, *he will take away the hedge thereof, and break down the wall hereof*, and then *it ſhall be eaten up, and trodden down*, *Iſa.* 5. 4, 5. then *the boar out of the Wood will waſte it, and the wild beaſt of the field will devour it*, for a time, till God attain his end, in their repentance and amendment; and then he will be intreated to return, and look down from heaven and behold and viſit this Vine, *Pſal.* 80. 13, 14. And when it becomes *a Vineyard of red wine*, holding forth the value and vertue of the blood of Chriſt, in their faith and obedience, ſee what he ſaith of it: *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day*, *Iſa.* 27. 2, 3. 2. The Church is Chriſts houſe, *the houſe of the living God*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. an houſe which coſt him more then all the ſilver, and gold, and precious ſtones in the world will amount unto. For *God purchaſed the Church with his blood*, *Acts* 20. 27, 28. Chriſt is the builder and gover-

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nor of it, *Heb.* 3. 3, 6. and therefore he will see to it, when it suffers any hurt, that it be repaired, and kept in repair. 3. The Church is Christs Kingdom, which God will maintain against all rebels, as you see at large, in the second Psalm. 4. The Church is Christs spouse, and therefore nearer and dearer to him then any other society in the World, *At his right hand stands the Queen in gold of Ophir, Psal.* 45. 9. as *Salomon* set his Mother at his right hand, to shew that she was next to him, and above all other his subjects. *Ahasuerosh* his wrath was so incensed against *Haman*, for plotting against his Queen, and her people, that he determined evil against him, and when he saw him fallen upon the bed whereon *Hester* was (though he did it to make request for his life) his wrath so boiled up to the height, that he said; *will he force the Queen also before me in the house?* Then they covered *Hamans* face, and, at the Kings command, hanged him upon the Gallows which he had prepared for *Mordecai*, as

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you may see in the 7th. Chapter of *Hester*. The love of Christ to the Church, which is his spouse, infinitely exceeds the love of *Ahasuerus* to *Hester*. Therefore they consult misery and ruin to themselves and their families, who plot against the Church. And wo to them that would force the Church to their own wills and devises, contrary to the mind of Christ. 5. The Church is Christs body and fulnesse; Christ hath not his fulnesse without his Church. *God hath put all things under Christs feet, and hath given him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulnesse of him that filleth all in all*, Eph. 1. 22, 23. Hence he sympathiseth with them. *In all their afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. and what is done against them, is done against him. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Acts 9. 4. as when the least toe is trodden upon, the head, by the tongue, cries, why do you hurt me? you see what Christs interest of propriety in his Church is, i.e. the greatest that can be. For it is his

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Vineyard; yea, more, his house, yet higher, his Kingdom, yet dearer, his spouse, and nearer yet, his own body. And, you know, propriety is of great force with all, to use all their wisdom and power to maintain and preserve their interest. Much more will Christ vindicate his own interest of propriety in his Church against all opposers of it. 2. Consider the Covenant, whereinto God hath taken his Church and people, together with the promises, that, as so many branches of the Covenant, belong unto them thereby. God saith unto his Church, *I sware unto thee, and entred into a Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*, Ezek. 16. 8. and of God it is said; *he will ever be mindful of his Covenant*, Psal. 111. 5. upon this ground the faith of the Church was strengthened, when they were in a very low and forlorn state, to plead with God; *Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is*

from

from everlasting, *Isa.* 63. 16. and again, in *verse* 19. *We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them, thy Name was not called upon of them.* The promises that belong unto the Church and people of God, under this relation, are innumerable. I shall touch upon two or three, that are suitable unto them, in reference to the opposition of their enemies, *Psal.* 37. 12, 13. *The wicked plotteth (or practiseth) against the just, and gnasheth at him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him*, (that is, shall render him ridiculous, and contemptible to others, as he plots to make the Church be unto the world) *for he seeth that his day is comming.* By *his Day*, is meant, his dismal day, the day of his calamity, the day appointed of God for his punishment, the destruction, the day when their iniquity shall have an end. Such a day is comming upon them: Therefore it is added, in *verse* 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but Jehovah upholdeth the righteous. Behold*, (saith the Lord) *I will make Jerusalem a Cup of trembling unto all peo-*

people that beſiege it round about, Zac. 12. 2. The beſiegers of *Jeruſalem*, the Church of God, think they may as eaſily ſwallow it up, as a man may drink a cup of wine, and it is as delightſome unto them to do ſo; but they ſhall find it a cup of giddineſſe, a drink too ſtrong for them; yea, a cup of poyſon, that will caſt them into a drunken ſleep, out of which when they ſhall be awakened, horrour, aſtoniſhment, trembling ſhall ſeize upon them. It is added, in *verſe* 3. *And in that day, I will make Jeruſalem a burdenſome ſtone, for all people; all that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces; though all the people of the earth be gathered together againſt it.* It is folly for any one to lift at a ſtone, that being too heavy for him to manage, will fall upon him and break his bones. Such a ſtone ſhall all that lift at the Church to remove it out of its place, find it to be unto themſelves. The Lord Jeſus, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, hath ſaid, ſpeaking of *Peters* confeſſing him

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to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, with a divine faith, such as is wrought by the Revelation of the Father) *upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, *Mat.* 16. 16, 17, 18. *The gates of Hell*, signifie all the power and policy of the Devil, and all his instruments, they shall not prevail against Christs Church, taken indefinitely. He will preserve his Church, in one place or other in the World, maugre all their malice. These, and the like promises, are *the streams*, which, flowing from that *river*, the Covenant of Grace, *make glad the City of God*, which is his Church, even when *the waters roar, and the mountains are shaken with the swelling thereof*, *Psal.* 46. 3, 4. That is, what ever changes of government are caused by the fury of a tumultuous multitude, stirred up by Satan and his instruments against the Church and people of God.

3. Consider the presence of God, in Christ with his Church, in their lowest and most afflicted condition; according to Christs promise to them,

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being taught to observe and do what he hath commanded, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*, *Mat.* 28. 20. This serves to strengthen the faith of Gods people concerning the Church, in her lowest and most afflicted estate; that *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved, God will help her, at the looking forth of the morning*, *Psal.* 46. 5. It is night with the Church, when *the nations make a noise and the Kingdoms are moved*, as it is said in the next verse; yet, even then, the Churches faith in God, as their portion, being quickened and strengthened, they say, *Jehovah of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob, an high refuge for us, Selah*: ver. 7. Therefore, that this consideration may the better serve to strengthen our faith, I shall shew you sundry Representations of Gods presence with his people in their lowest, and most afflicted condition, which the Scripture holdeth forth unto us. Unto *Abraham* it was represented, under a double similitude: 1. *Of fowles coming*

ming down upon the carcasses, about to be sacrificed, and *Abrahams driving them away*, *Gen.* 15. 11. which represented the *Ægyptians*, and all enemies of the Church, which disturbe the people of God in their religious duties of Gods worship, and that seek to devour the people of God, as Kites or Eagles, &c, devour carcasses, and Gods presence and readinesse to drive them away. 2. Of *a smoaking furnace and a burning lamp*, *verse* 17. The smoaking furnace, notes great afflictions, fiery tryals, which shall befal the *Israel* of God. The burning lamp, signifieth that God in Christ is with them, at such times, to save them, *Isa.* 62. 1. Unto *Moses* it was represented under *the appearing of the Angel of God in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush*, *the bush burned with fire*, *and the bush was not consumed*. *Isa.* 3. 2. This *Moses* lopked at as *a great sight*; and so may we. For, the bush, is the Church of God, which is burned with fiery tryals: But whence is it that it is not consumed? It is not from the im-

impotency of the fire to burn the bush, nor from the strength of the bush to resist the fire, but from the presence of God in Christ, as appears, *ver.* 6, 7, *&c.* To *Ezekiel* it was represented under the similitude of a *valley, wherein were many bones, and they very dry*, *Ezek.* 37. 2. The valley signified the low estate of the Church; the many dry bones denoted the discouraging apprehensions the people of God have, when they look upon the power of the enemies, and their own weakness, with the eye of sense, for so the Lord said, in *verse* 11. *Behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts:* Yet the Lord to quicken their faith, promiseth a resurrection to them. Another resemblance of Gods presence with his Church and people, in the midst of their greatest afflictions, we have in those three companions of *Daniel, who were cast bound into the midst of the fire, yet the fire had no power upon their bodies, not so much as to singe their hair, or to change their coats.* The reason of it

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was, because the Son of God was with them, *Dan.* 3. 25. Unto *Zachary* another resemblance hereof was presented; he *saw, by night a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees, that were in the bottom*, *Zach.* 1. 8. The night, is the time of affliction; the bottom is the low condition of the Church, which is likened unto myrtle trees for its sweet savour unto God. And, in this low afflicted estate, Christ is with them, riding upon a red horse, as ready to fight against those that afflicted his Church, for whom he interceds and receives gracious answers. Again, in *Zach.* 12. 2, 3. the Lord fore-told that he would *make Jerusalem a Cup of trembling to the borderers*, who thought they could as easily swallow them up, as one may drink a cup of wine, and they would do the one with as much pleasure as the other. But, saith the Lord, the effects of this cup shall be trembling and astonishment in you. And, in *ver.* 3. he saith, *he will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all people that are*

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gathered together against it; they shall be cut in pieces. Then they will see cause to wish they had never *burdened themselves with it.* Thus you see, upon what firm grounds the faith of Gods people concerning the good purposes of God towards his Church, in their lowest, and most afflicted condition, may be strengthened and settled.

2. This ground-work being thus laid, build and exercise this hope upon it, in its suitable operations, and works.

1. In its purging work: For, *he that hath this hope purgeth himself,* 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. Then we work with God, when we improve Gods means to Gods end. Gods end, in afflicting his Church, is, not to destroy it, but to purge it. So he saith, in *Isa.* 1. 25, 26. *I will turn mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy drosse, and take away all thy tinne. And I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Councellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called the City of righteous*

teousnesse, the faithful City. There he compares the afflictions of his Church and people to the fire whereinto Gold and Silver is cast, which loseth nothing thereby, but its drosse and tinne; but the metal it self is thereby made more pure and fit for honourable uses, and services. In the 27th. Chapter, the 8. and 9. verses, the same is expressed under two other metaphors: 1. Of an Husband-man, or Vine-dresser. *In measure, and in the branches, wilt thou debate with it;* as the Husband-man or Vinecoome, doth not stock up the roots, to destroy the fruit trees and Vines, but onely lopp them, and prune them, by taking away their luxuriant and superfluous branches, that so they may become more fruitful.

2. Of stormy winds. He instanceth in the East-wind, which is hurtful to the trees and corn, in those hot Eastern Countreys, by blasting them, *Gen.* 41. 6. by its scorching heat, whence the *Gracians* call it καύσωνα, yet the Lord saith he will so order it, that no hurt shall redound to his

Church

Church and people, by it, but, *by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this shall be all the fruit, to take away his sin.* Now, seeing this is Gods end and way; let all the Churches and people of God, act accordingly, in this time of *Jacobs* troubles, looking up to God in Christ for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to make this use of his afflicting providences, to be awakened and excited to purge, first, their own hearts, then, the Churches, more fully and perfectly. It is no true policy, but folly, in such times, to seek an escape from troubles and dangers, by complyance with the inventions of men, and customes of degenerate Churches and Christians, in the matters of Religion. For that is the ground of Gods controversie with his people, for which he testifieth against them, with so strong and open rebukes. But account the fear of God to be the head-point and beginning of wisdom. Till men exercise the fear of God, in all their wayes, they do not begin to act wisely. This point of true wisdom God

taught *Iosua*, when he was exceedingly dejected, in *Josh.* 7. 10. to 14. and the Church, in captivity practised accordingly. For they confessed that their sorrows and sufferings were the effects of their sins; and therefore resolved to *search and try their wayes and turn again to the Lord*; and then, having removed the impediments, their hope was quickened to *lift up their hearts with their hands unto God, in the heavens*, *Lam.* 3. 39, 40, 41. *Shecaniah* also, observing how the hearts of Gods people were prepared to seek reconciliation with God, confessed that they had trespassed against God, in the particular sin discovered to them, and added; *yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.* And thereupon inferred, *Now therefore let us make a Covenant with our God, &c.* and incouraged *Ezra* to act vigorously for reformation, *Ezra* 10. 2, 3, 4. The like course the Church resolved to take, upon incouragement of the like hope in *Hos.* 6. 1, 2, 3. This course we also must take, in this hour of temptation, if we

we would have a good issue of these afflicting dispensations, which are upon us.

2. Exercise this hope in its quickening and incouraging work. For this hope is a *lively hope*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. It is very dishonourable to God, and uncomely for Christians, to be despondent and discouraged, in such times of trial. The time of *Jacobs* trial should be the time of *Iacobs* trusting in God. So did the Church, when the enemies insulted, in *Mich.* 7. 8. *Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darknesse, the Lord shall be a light unto me.* Two objections are wont to arise in the minds of Gods people in such times, to weaken their hope in God, you have them both in the answer of *Gideon* to the Angel, who said unto him, *the Lord is with thee*, *Iudg.* 6. 12, 13, *And Gideon said unto him, oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all the miracles which our Fathers told us of?* These are the two temptations which,

if they be not ſcattered, will hinder the exerciſe of this hope. 1. *If God be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* Therefore, to arm you, conſider, that theſe two, Gods preſence with his people, and calamities incumbent upon them, may well conſiſt together. For wiſe and holy ends God ſuffers extream calamities to befal his Churches and people, before he reacheth forth his hands to deliver them. Particularly, he thus diſpenſeth: 1. That he may thereby convince them of the vanity of thoſe creature-propps, whereupon they are wont to rely too much, and to purge carnal confidence out of them. This was the great ſin of the people of *Iſrael*, to truſt in the ſhadow of *Ægypt*, and to rely upon *Aſſyria*, though they were fore-warned that *Ægypt* would be a broken reed, which would rather hurt then help them; *therefore*, ſaith the Lord, *have I cryed to her; their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill*, *Iſa.* 30. 6, 7. that is, to renounce their creature dependencies, and to expect ſalvation from God alone, according to *Moſes* his exhor-

mation,

tation, in *Exod.* 14. 13. But they continually disobeyed God herein, till the Lord had convinced them of their sin and folly, by their Captivity in *Babylon*, from which no creature could deliver them. Then, when God by affliction had wrought their hearts to an humble frame, and to repentance, they expresse it, in reference to this sin, particularly, saying, *Asshur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, &c. for in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy, Hos.* 14. 3. The like controversie God hath with his Churches and people, at this day, for their trusting too much in the arm of flesh, in the Parliament, in the Army, or in the Protector; and thereupon became carnally secure and wanton, and slight, when they had such propps to stay upon, and answerably dejected and almost discouraged, when they failed them. The Lord awaken and humble his people for it, and cause their eyes, for the future, to be towards him alone. 2. That his people may see him in his glory, and glorifie him alone for their deliverances, he brings

them unto a ſeemingly forlorne condition, and helpleſſe, to the eye of ſenſe. So in *Iſa.* 33.9,10. *The earth mourneth and languiſheth; Lebanon is aſhamed, and withered; Sharon is like a Wilderneſſe; and Baſhan and Carmel. All things fail: Now will I riſe, Now will I be exalted; ſaith the Lord; Now will I lift up my ſelf.* Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.

3. That, Gods faithfulneſſe in his promiſe may be glorified. For ſo he hath promiſed in *Deut.* 32. 36. *The Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, &c.* And, in *Pſ.* 12. 5. *For the oppreſſion of the poor, for the ſighing of the needy, now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord, I will ſet in ſalvation, he ſhall have breathing.* You ſee how low they are brought, they are poor and needy, and oppreſſed, ſo, as they dare not make complaints openly, but ſigh and groan ſecretly. This is the time when God promiſeth to riſe up, and to give ſalvation to them. And, to ſhew that this is Gods con-

constant way, in performing his promise, the *Psalmist* addeth his *protestation* to it, in the next verse; *the sayings of Jehovah*, that is, his promises, and, in particular, those that are of this import and concernment, *are pure sayings, as silver tried in a subliming furnace of earth, fined seven times*; that is, the Saints have, by constant experience, found the truth and faithfulness of God in performing them. 4. That thus God may raise and heighten the esteem of his favours in the hearts of his people, when they are beyond, and above their expectation. This effect followed the return of the people of God from their Captivity in *Babylon*, *Psal.* 126. 1, 2, 3. *When Jehovah returned the Captivity of Sion; we were like them that dream*; that is, it was so far above our thoughts, that we questioned whether it was true, or no, as *Peter* did, in *Acts* 12. 9. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joyful shouting.* This did so raise their joy and thanksgiving to

God, that it brake forth into ſhooting. The very heathens admired and ſaid, *God hath done great things for them.* Much more were themſelves affected, and therefore they added, *Jehovah hath done very great things for us, we are joyful.* 5. That, by ſuch diſpenſations, their faith and obedience may be more fully tryed and perfected. It is ſaid of Chriſt, that, *though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he ſuffered, Heb.* 5. 8. that is, by his ſufferings, he had the experimental knowledge of that mediatourly obedience, which he, as our ſurety, was to perform; which is noted, in *Phil.* 2. 8. So the Churches of Chriſt are brought low, that they may learn, experimentally, ſuffering obedience, which is the higheſt obedience of faith. They are brought into a widdow-like condition, that, as *ſhe that is a widdow indeed, and deſolate, truſteth in God, and continueth in ſupplications, and prayers, night and day,* 1 *Tim.* 5. 5. ſo they may be diſpoſed

ſpoſed ſuitably to Gods end, in afflicting them, who ſaith, *I will leave in the middeſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the Name of the Lord*, *Zeph.* 3. 12. 6. That they may be more fervent in prayer: this operation hope had in *David*, when he was brought ſo low that he ſaid, *I looked on the right hand, and beheld, and no man acknowledged me, refuge is periſhed from me, no man ſeeketh for my ſoul.* This quickned and intended his fervency in prayer, *I cryed unto thee, Jehovah, and ſaid, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living*, *Pſal.* 142. 4, 5. Deſpaire in the creatures help is oftentimes the ground of hope in God for help. For infinite goodneſſe, accompanied with infinite wiſdom and power, can never be at a loſſe, nor can faith and hope, which look at them, ever be at a ſtand. As God knows our ſouls in adverſity, *Pſal.* 31. 7. ſo we know God beſt in adverſity. God is beſt ſeen in the Mount. To the ſecond objection;

and where be all his Miracles, which our Fathers told us of? I ſhall ſpeak briefly. It hath been ſometimes that which hath troubled the Saints, That they ſee not ſuch great things done for the Church, in our dayes, as we read of in former times. But there is no cauſe for it. For the hand of the Lord is not ſhortned, nor is his Church lower in his eſteem than formerly. When the Lord had ſaid by his Prophet, *The People which were left of the ſword found grace in the wilderneſs*, Jerem. 31. 2. the people anſwered, *Jehovah hath appeared of old*: as if they ſhould ſay, Truth, he did ſo, in time paſt; thoſe were good dayes indeed: but now thoſe dayes are gone, we muſt look for no more of them. The Lord replyed, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with loving kindneſſe have I drawn thee*, Verſ. 3. teaching us thereby to improve former Experiences, to the ſtrengthening of our Faith, for the preſent, and our hope; for the future. Experience is a multiplyed remembrance of former favours,

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and Blessings, which will help to multiply our Hope: For *Experience worketh Hope*, Rom. 5. 4. Hope encouraged by Experience, will encourage unto Prayer, *Psal.* 22. 4. Hence arose that pleading of Believers with God in Prayer, in *Isa.* 51. 9. *Awake, Awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord, awake, as in the ancient dayes, in the Generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon of the Sea? Art thou not it which hath dryed the Sea?* V. 10. And fervent Prayer encreaseth and strengtheneth this Hope; Thus Christ teacheth us, in the Parable of the Widdow importuning the Unjast Judg, *Luke* 18. 6, 7, 8. *Joab* never put up a more acceptable Request unto *David*, than when he interceded for his banished *Absalon*. God is much more pleased to be petitioned for his afflicted Church, *Psal.* 122. 6. He is very ready to answer such Prayers with good Returns: For he saith, *Ask me of things to come, concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me*, Isa. 45. 11.

3. Exercise

3. Exerciſe this Hope in its ſtrengthening work. In every Degree of the Exerciſe of this Hope there is an anſwerable Degree of Joy; *We rejoyce in tribulation under the hope of glory*, Rom. 5. 2, 3. and anſwerable to our *joy* in God will be our *ſtrength* in God, *Neh.* 8. 10. Therefore let this Hope ſtrengthen you, 1. *To cleave unto God with purpoſe of heart*, Acts 11. 23. It is good cleaving to him who will never leave nor forſake his People in their diſtreſs, *Heb.* 13. 5, 6. They that forſake God to cleave to other helpers, will finde their Hopes diſappointed, when they have moſt need of help; Then God will ſay, *Where are their Gods, their rock in whom they truſted?* Deut. 32. 37. And they ſhall not know what to anſwer, but be aſhamed of that which cannot profit nor deliver: for they are vain. When the People of God are in diſtreſs, wicked men will inſult againſt them, and ſay, *Where is now their God?* Pſal. 115. 2. But their anſwer is ready, *Our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed*, Verſ. 3. They will be ready

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to ſay, Where are your Faſtings? your Prayers? your confidence in God? The Anſwer is eaſie, they are with God in his Book of Remembrance: they are as ſeed ſown in Heaven, whence we ſhall reap a plentifull crop of mercy, in due time. But how eaſily may that be retorted upon them, in reference to God, and his People, which *Zebul* replyed unto *Gaal*, in reference to *Abimelech*, in *Judg.* 9. 38. *Where is now thy mouth, which ſaid, who is the Lord, that we ſhould ſerve him? Is not this the People whom thou haſt deſpiſed?* Only be ſure, if you would cleave to God, that you cleave to his Word, and every truth in it, when it is oppoſed by a ſinfull and unbelieving Generation: *Contend for the Faith which was once given to the Saints*, Jude 3. ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι ſignifies, not ſimply to contend, but with all our might, and more, if it were poſſible. The thing to be contended for is, *the Faith*, not a Fancy, but the Truths received with Faith, upon Gods Authority in his Word, the leaſt jot and tittle whereof God values at a higher

higher rate than Heaven and Earth, *Matth.* 5. 18. and the Martyrs of Jesus esteemed it above all worldly things, and above their Lives. And so should we. 3. This Faith was *once* delivered once for all. If it be lost, or exchanged for errour, there is danger that it will be lost for ever, as we might prove by many examples of Apostates, who have become Infidels and Atheists. 4. This Faith was *delivered*, deposited, committed to our trust, of which a strict Account must be given how we have kept and used it.

There are *three* things which above all others God expects we should keep most carefully and faithfully from being wronged: 1. His own Name, which is put upon us. 2. His Church. 3. His Truths contained in Scripture, 2 *Tim.* 1. 14. 5. This *Depositum* is committed to the Saints, in common; not only to Ministers or Magistrates, but also to all Believers. It is the *common Faith*, wherein every Believer hath his interest in common with the rest; as all Planters or Inhabitants have in the Commons that belong to

a Town, for which they will contend with any man that ſhall wrong them in that their Intereſt. 6. *Salvation*, and this Faith are joyned, to teach us, to provide for our Salvation by keeping the Faith. Faith and Salvation are kept or loſt together. 2. To wait patiently and conſtantly upon God, in doing and ſuffering his will: For God ſometimes puts a long Date to the performance of his Promiſes. But Gods deferring is no empty ſpace but a time of fitting his Church and People for the good things promiſed. Whiles Phyſick is working the time is not loſt, though health be not yet recovered: For, when the ſick humor is purged out, then comes health, ſee *Iſaiah* 30. 18. only be carefull, that whileſt you wait, you do not croſs your Hope by ſinning againſt him, upon whom you wait. True waiting is not a meer ſtaying Gods leaſure, but a continuing in a gracious inoffenſive courſe, till the good waited for be attained.

FINIS.